

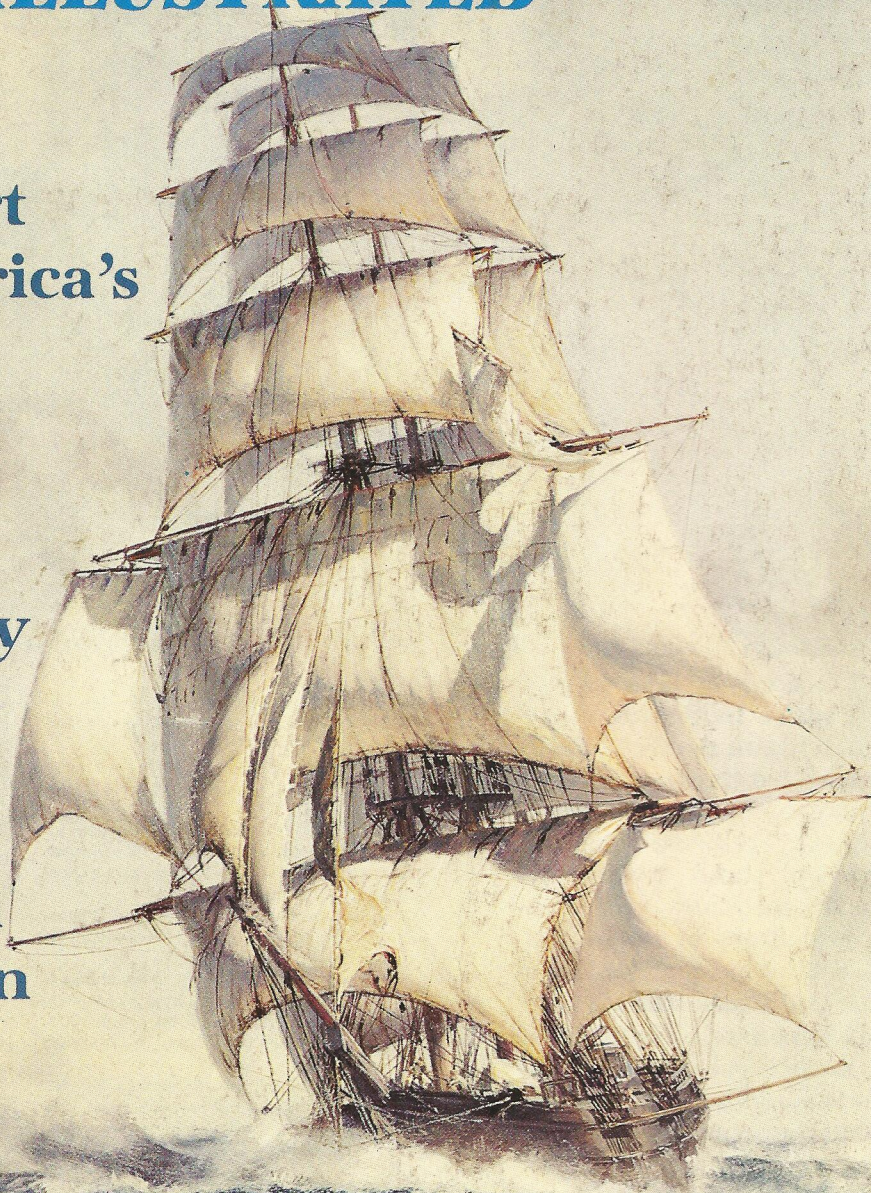
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# Dutch Countryside Tour

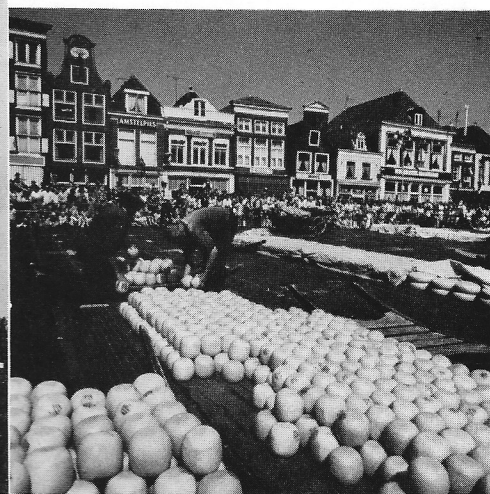
including two nights with a Dutch family in a farm or country home!



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## Itinerary:

**Saturday, June 14:** Check-in at New York's Kennedy Airport and enjoy a get-acquainted reception before boarding overnight flight to Amsterdam.

**Sunday, June 15:** Arrive at Amsterdam International Airport. Welcoming cocktail party and dinner tonight.

**Monday, June 16:** At Alkmaar to see the historic city center with its cheese market. Our route takes us over the North Sea Dyke. Arrive at Leeuwarden, capital city of Friesland, dinner and overnight.

**Tuesday, June 17:** Ferry to Texel Island. Visit a typical Friesland dairy farm. Back to Leeuwarden for an evening performance of Friesland folklore.

**Wednesday, June 18:** Motor south to the shores of the IJsselmeer. See this dramatic land reclamation scheme first hand. Visit the traditional village of Sloten. Travel to Zwolle, regional capital of Overijssel, dinner and overnight.

**Thursday, June 19:** Continue to Gelderland province for a two-night stay in farm and country homes. Visit the village of Giethoorn, the "Venice" of Holland. At Arnhem, visit the Muller Museum. Dinner included both nights.

**Friday, June 20:** Tour the open air museum in Arnhem, which displays Holland's national culture. Return to individual homes late this afternoon.

**Saturday, June 21:** Motor to Brabant, to visit the Eurobird Park at Oisterwijk. Continue to Maastricht, for dinner and lodging.

**Sunday, June 22:** Leave Holland for Germany, traveling to the Rhineland and Cologne. Dinner and lodging tonight in Bonn.

**Monday, June 23:** Travel through Rhine Valley to Koblenz. Drive west to Belgian border via Liege, visit Waterloo. Sightseeing, dinner and hotel in Brussels.

**Tuesday, June 24:** Travel to the medieval city of Ghent, visit the great cathedral. Continue to Bruges. Visit a workshop to see how the world's finest lace is made. Dinner and overnight.

**Wednesday, June 25:** Return to the Netherlands via Antwerp, visiting the Delta Expo at Stellendam, a display of the Delta land protection and reclamation scheme. Visit Beveland and Zierikzee. Continue to Rotterdam. Cruise along the great harbor. Dinner and overnight.

**Thursday, June 26:** Travel to Gouda, famous for its cheese. At Boskoop, visit a working nursery. Visit the Rosarium. Continuing to Amsterdam, shopping, dinner and overnight.

**Friday, June 27:** Morning sightseeing tour to the

famous Rijksmuseum, where many art masterpieces are on display, and to the Ann Frank house. Take a canal boat tour of the heart of Amsterdam. Visit the windmills at Zaandam. Farewell dinner tonight.

**Saturday, June 28:** Transfer to Schiphol Airport for return flight home.

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TSAMDC



# AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME XX, NUMBER 8    DECEMBER 1985



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*A renowned marine artist presents a portfolio of great ships, ports, and events from America's nautical past.*

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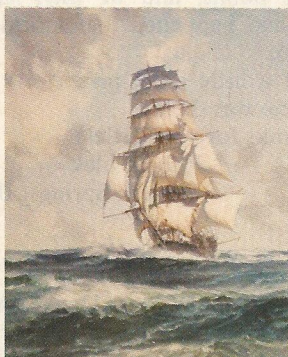
*A participant in one of the most daring of Civil War prisoner breakouts wrote this classic narrative of courage and adventure.*

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## Cover

The *Empress of the Seas* was one of several celebrated clipper ships launched in 1853 from the East Boston shipyard of master builder Donald McKay. At the height of the California gold rush she made several fast passages between New York and San Francisco. She burned in 1860 off Port Phillip, at the approaches to Melbourne, Australia. For a portfolio of paintings by renowned maritime artist John Stobart, turn to pages 20-31.

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# Mailbox

## A Witness at the Beginning

Just a few lines on your article on the beginning of the Atomic Era ["1945: A Year in History," June issue].

It so happened that I was stationed at the Alamogordo Army Air Base on July 16, 1945. North of the base was a large area that was off-limits to all aircraft, and where the atomic explosion took place. Our quarters were dirty, flimsy, tarpaper shacks with oil stoves and no screens. The base was used to train B-29 bomber crews, of which I was a trainee. The mess hall and other menial duties were handled by German prisoners of war of the Afrika Korps.

On the morning of July 16, 1945, I was awakened by a great shuddering of the ground and barracks, and an intense light as if the noonday sun was out. We ran outside, and the great mushroom cloud was rising into the dark sky. The winds (away from the explosion) were quite strong, the light intense. Someone speculated that a B-29 had crashed with a full load of explosives. No one in our group knew what was going on. We could have all been blinded and were certainly exposed to radiation. Fortunately, to my knowledge no one has suffered any ill effects.

The following day there was a special issue of the base newspaper, where the commanding officer of the base stated that "an ammunition dump had blown up." No one questioned this official explanation until news of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was released to the public, and we then realized what had happened that morning of July 16.

Just a little more perspective from one who was there.

Thanks for your article.

Robert Jilek

Western Springs, Illinois

## The Best of Enemies

Regarding Sir William Howe ["A Failure to Communicate," October 1985 issue]—he is one of my favorite "heroes"—he helped the Colonials win the Revolution!

Some historians note that he was so defeated at Bunker Hill that he lost his spirit of "fight" and never wanted to fight another battle. He was miraculously protected, and he *did* lead his

troops in the withering fire of the Colonials, who did not fire until they could see the "whites" of the eyes of determined gigantic Redcoats approaching them, trudging up the steep hillside through hay ready to cut. Only after the Colonials ran out of powder did the Redcoats "win," though they never really accepted their victory! Such a Pyrrhic "victory" it was no victory. Howe was stunned for hours.

As a Whig in Boston he had many friends among the Colonials; he did his job at Bunker Hill, but he never really wanted to fight another battle or lead another charge! Later, in too many battles, Howe stopped the fight for one reason or another rather than push his men on to what appeared to the Colonials, and Washington, to be certain victory. Washington took advantage of every laxity Howe displayed.

And don't forget, Howe had one special "lady friend" who followed him to every battle area; she was waiting for him to get to her arms for love and comfort. This is not imagination! Historians do not make enough of this fact in the life of Sir William Howe, but a close check of history will prove it to any seeker. Obviously Howe wanted the Colonials to win their freedom from England!

Ella May Frazer

Las Cruces, New Mexico

## When Time Was Cheap

I was very much interested in your article on *Life* magazine in the current issue of *American History Illustrated* ["Birth of a Great Magazine," September issue].

I designed the first cover of *Time* and arranged for Oberhart (Obie) to draw the heads on each issue. They still use my lettering for their logo.

Henry Luce and Briton Hadden were good friends, also Archie MacLeish.

After I had designed the cover of *Time*, Brit asked me out to lunch. He said, "Gordon, the bill we agreed upon for designing the cover is \$1,500. We don't have that kind of money. Would you consider taking stock instead?" Well, several magazines had gone broke that year, so I said, "I'll reduce the bill to \$1,000."

Two years later the stock had gone sky high. At that time I was asked by *Newsweek* to design their cover. When



the time came for them to pay my bill, they were in the same financial difficulty, so they asked me if I would take stock. I accepted gladly. Two years later the stock was worth not one penny.

That's what happens to an artist when he tries to be an expert in business.

Before I did art consultant work I was art editor of *Harpers* and *Vanity Fair*. Of course I knew Clare Boothe Luce.

I am now ninety-two years old, having quit a career in portrait painting (235 portraits). I paint seascapes and landscapes and enjoy every minute of it.

Gordon C. Aymar  
South Kent, Connecticut

### Newton's Laws are Strictly Enforced

Harold C. Carter's letter [October 1985 "Mailbox"] corrected one error. A "9-pounder" shoots a shot of nine pounds of mass. It does not use a mass of nine pounds of powder. He erred in using the verb "to weigh." The weight of a given mass varies with the location and time, like the tides. The pound is a unit of mass, not weight.

The King James Bible (1611) used the word "weight" to mean quantity of matter because mass/weight intelligence was not given to the translators. Isaac Newton used "mass" for quantity of matter and "weight" for the force acting on the mass in *Principia* (1687). International agreement was achieved in Paris in 1901 (Treaty of the Meter) on the Newtonian definitions of these words. Unfortunately we have not had competent people in our government who knew the difference between mass and weight or had the moral integrity to call mass "mass" for eighty-four years. Our government and dictionaries (with uneducated editors) are in noncompliance with this Treaty agreement.

Instead of re-fighting the Civil War, let us modify our language to show respect for Newton's Laws. These laws are strictly enforced in our Solar System. Even Comet "Holly" obeys them. After a quarter century of "weightlessness" on TV the WEIGHTgate cover-up cannot continue. It is time to call mass "mass" and leave the dark ages of mass/weight ignorance behind us.

Richard Carl Gerke  
Consulting Civil Engineer  
Sierra Madre, California

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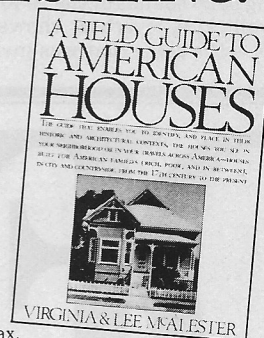
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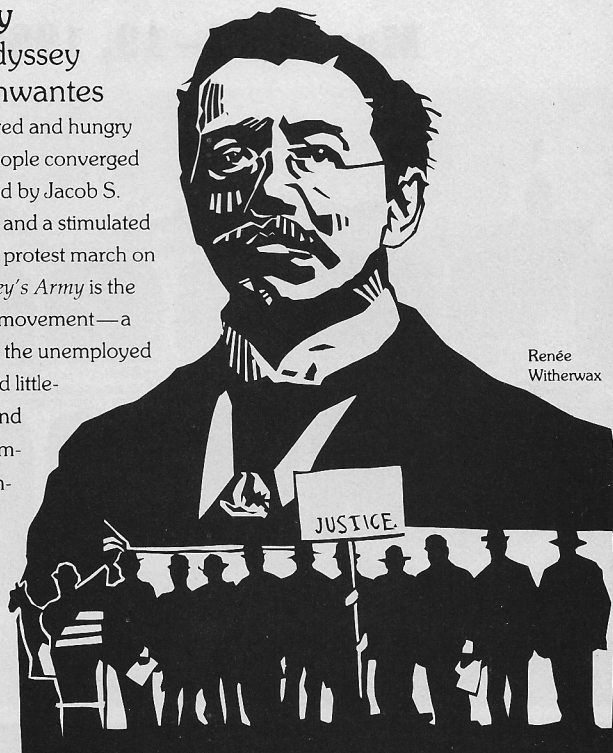
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**Saturday, March 15:** This afternoon, we stop for a visit to Houmas House, the famous 1840's Greek Revival plantation mansion built by John Smith Preston. Originally, grounds covered 20,000 acres and the plantation was worked by 550 slaves. You'll have the opportunity to tour the mansion and formal gardens.

**Sunday, March 16:** This morning takes us to Baton Rouge and the heart of Cajun country. You'll be able to tour the city and a nearby Cajun village. You'll hear spoken Cajun—the ancient French dialect that few outsiders can understand. *Laissez le bon temps roulez!*

**Monday, March 17:** We steam upriver and

reach Natchez by afternoon, where the local garden club will have made arrangements for us to tour several of the city's incomparable ante-Bellum mansions, reminders of the opulent era when cotton was king.

**Tuesday, March 18:** In 1850, half of America's millionaires lived in West Feliciana Parish. Typical of the splendor in which they lived is Rosedown Plantation, in St. Francisville, built in 1835 by Daniel and Martha Turnbull. We'll stop for a visit this morning. The mansion is filled with priceless furniture and period antiques from around the world. The formal gardens and impeccably-groomed grounds are so beautiful that Audubon painted over 80 birds of America right here. The house and gardens are fully restored—an "eternal museum of plantation life as it was in the golden years before the Civil War."

**Wednesday, March 19:** Arrive New Orleans. Individual departures this morning. Our trip may be over, but the memories will live forever. Truly, an experience of a lifetime! You haven't seen America till you've been steamboatin'.

*\*Itinerary and Features subject to change without notice\**

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T5AMDQ



## An Ill-Fated Name

Recently while reading the Time-Life books *The U-Boats* [by Douglas Botting and the editors of Time-Life, 1979], I came across the following statement: "In the South West approaches on December 6, 1917, [Lieutenant Hans] Rose torpedoed the U.S. Navy destroyer *Jacob Jones*, the first American destroyer to be sunk by a U-Boat in the War."

Checking my back issues of *American History Illustrated*, I found "The Night of the Roper" by Homer H. Hickam, Jr., in the October 1984 issue, in which Mr. Hickam says that the U.S. Navy destroyer *Jacob Jones* was sunk by a U-Boat on February 28, 1942.

My question is: when and where was the *Jacob Jones* sunk — on December 6, 1917, or February 28, 1942?


I've been a subscriber for many years and have enjoyed every issue.

Donald L. Springer  
Phelps, New York

*Both dates are in fact correct, but they refer to two different destroyers. The first Jacob Jones (DD-61) was commissioned in 1914. She sank on December 6, 1917, eight minutes after being hit by a torpedo from the U-53 off the southwest coast of England. She was the first U.S. destroyer sunk by a U-Boat in World War I; and sixty-four men went down with the ship.*

*The second Jacob Jones (DD-130) was commissioned in 1919. She was torpedoed by the U-578 off the coast of New Jersey on February 28, 1942 — becoming, ironically, one of the first U.S. destroyers sunk by U-Boats in World War II. Only eleven men were ultimately rescued.*

*A third Jacob Jones (DE-130) was commissioned in 1943.*



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## Closing the Debate: Gentlemen or Traitors?

I think that it is time for you to confess that letters such as Howard L. Campbell's [June "Mailbox"] and Steve Batson's [October "Mailbox"] are figments of editorial imagination. On the other hand, if those men are for real, I would like to point out to Steve and Howard that in civil war, the traitors are all on the losing side. The winners select the heroes. If the Revolution had been won by the British, George Washington would be the arch-traitor and Benedict Arnold a tainted hero. Both George Washington and Robert E. Lee previously were lieutenant colonels in the armies they fought against.

I am certainly not qualified to speak with authority, but I think it may be unique to world history that the losers in a rebellion are as highly respected and revered as many of the Confederate leaders are today.

No one living today is qualified to judge the motives of the men of both the North and the South who fought in the Civil War. The intensity of the fighting and the privations endured surely show that the majority fought with deep conviction. Enjoy your heroes and revel in their deeds, but attempting to enhance one side by denigrating the other is childish.

Three of my great-grandfathers (one of whom I remember) and at least seventeen other ancestors served in the Union Army. Seven did not return, of which two died of disease and malnutrition in Libby Prison. This in no way diminishes my pleasure in reading of the heroic exploits of those Americans whose heritage I share, who were for a short time considered the enemy.

Murray Combs  
Glen Burnie, Maryland

*(We are too busy meeting deadlines to write letters to ourselves. Ed.)*

How terrible for Howard Campbell and Steve Batson to have missed the Civil War. The sectional hatred expressed in their letters [June and October issues] would do credit to the fire-eater, North or South, who knew the fighting intimately from the pages of his weekly illustrated, but was forced to hire a substitute because of his bad back.

If only Mr. Campbell had been there to ride through Mississippi with William Sooy Smith's command, Bedford Forrest would have been arrested on a

charge of high treason and slapped into irons.

If only Mr. Batson had been there to explain to great-great-grandfather Wheeler (First Sergeant, Company K, Sixth Maryland), who limped with the Sixth Corps all the way to Appomattox on hardtack, dysentery, rheumatism, and a badly ulcerated left knee, that "the Union knows nothing of suffering . . . bitterness and pain."

Some time back an eighty-four-year-old "traitor," Joe Johnston, stood bareheaded in the February cold until he caught his death. He was paying tribute to the funeral cortege of his former enemy, the "beast" William Sherman. Maybe the story is apocryphal, but I believe Johnston refused even the covering of an umbrella, saying, "Sherman would have done the same for me."

I guess such mutual respect isn't for strong, uncompromising men like Campbell and Batson; evidently they see the issues of the war more clearly than fellows like Johnston or Sherman ever did.

R.E.L. Richards  
Westfield, New Jersey

As a United States history teacher, I have used *American History Illustrated* as a supplement for course work for years. . . .

I have followed with interest the continuing, sometimes "uncivil" war of words relating to Gerard Patterson's April article "Rebels from West Point." The article presents a thought-provoking historical issue. The letters to the editor demonstrate the dangers of being a(n) historian and the near-impossibility of writing history that will not have a variety of interpretations depending upon one's personal perceptions.

I have always stressed the importance of historical interpretation to my students, and this issue provides an excellent case study of the subject . . . I [plan to present] the article, and all subsequent letters related to it, as a learning packet for my students.

Wayne E. Morley  
Sewell, New Jersey

*American History Illustrated welcomes and values comments from our readers. Publication of reader comments does not necessarily imply editorial endorsement of the views expressed. Address correspondence to The Mailbox, American History Illustrated, Box 8200, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105. ★*



## History Bookshelf

**Christopher Columbus** by Gianni Granzotto, translated by Stephen Sartarelli (*Doubleday & Company, New York, 1985; 300 pages, maps, \$18.95*). One of the great heroes of exploration, Christopher Columbus "discovered" America in 1492, as every school child in this country is taught. Many, however, do not realize that Columbus was really a tragic figure, who, after four voyages to the New World, still refused to believe that he had not reached Asia. While his well-known ocean voyages to the Americas are widely acclaimed, seldom does history remind us that Columbus lost forty men in a bungled attempt at American colonization, or that he and his men treated the native Americans so brutally that the Spanish authorities had him returned to Europe in chains. Yet, despite his failures, Christopher Columbus catapulted the world from the Dark Ages into the Renaissance. Columbus was obsessed with the sea and exploration even as a child, and probably sailed in his first ship when he was but thirteen or fourteen. Following completion of his fourth and final ocean voyage in 1504, Columbus returned to his adopted Spain, in poor spirits and poorer health, a broken man who would die two years later at the young age of fifty-five. Author Gianni Granzotto sifts through the volumes of vague and nebulous material about Columbus to put together a clear and compelling picture of the great explorer's life. A well-known Italian historian, Granzotto spent six years researching and writing this account, and also retraced Columbus's first ocean voyage in a small boat.

**The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why It Failed** by Paul B. Ryan (*Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1985; 185 pages, illustrated, \$13.95*).

The first objective, fully documented public account of the disastrous 1980 military operation designed to free American hostages from their Iranian captors, *The Iranian Rescue Mission* explains what happened and why. Retired naval officer and historian Paul Ryan pieces together (within limits opposed by security) all of the significant elements of the tragic episode, not only to analyze what went wrong, but also to point out how future failures in such covert operations might be

avoided. Also presented for the first time in detail are the findings of the official review board, headed by Admiral James L. Holloway III, that investigated the operation. Until all official records are declassified at some future date, this account will probably remain the most complete source available on the topic. Says Ryan of the aborted rescue mission, in which eight American servicemen perished in a C-130/helicopter collision at Desert One: "When the disaster is viewed from the evidence presently available, the facts suggest that the operation exposed serious deficiencies in the military decision-making system that may require substantial changes." He also suggests that President Carter did not have sufficient experience in operations such as this to make sound decisions.

**A Sense of History: The Best Writing from the Pages of American Heritage** compiled by the editors of *American Heritage Magazine*, with an introductory note by Byron Dobell (*American Heritage, New York/Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1985; 840 pages, \$29.95*).

A collection of fifty-six of the finest articles published over the past thirty years on the pages of *American Heritage*, *A Sense of History* is a revealing and entertaining informal overview of American civilization from its first European settlers to the fall of Richard Nixon. The list of contributing authors includes some of the foremost American writers, historians, and public figures in recent years. Clinton Rossiter, Stephen B. Oates, Henry Steele Commager, Bruce Catton, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Allan Nevins cover such diverse topics as Teddy Roosevelt's Mideast crisis, the Great Depression, the famous F.W. Woolworth Building, the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Vietnam experience, and Bruce Catton's personal tribute to that all-American institution, baseball. A particularly interesting section, "I Wish I'd Been There," is a compilation of the answers of a number of public figures, authors, and scholars, who were asked which one scene or event in American history they would like to have witnessed—and why. This hefty volume provides an almost limitless fount of pleasurable reading for the history enthusiast. ★

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I certify the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

ED HOLM, Editor



Thirty years after spearheading the bus boycott that led to a new era for blacks in America, E.D. Nixon appears to be the forgotten pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement.

# The Father His Children Forgot

by Richard Blake Dent

**H**e is the father whose children have forgotten him. "I think the children ought to know about this thing. The history ought to be written true. Give him [Martin Luther King, Jr.] all he earned, but don't rob me."

Eighty-six-year-old E.D. Nixon pauses. Two tears form in his tired, worn eyes. He stares blankly into the air. The pain that he cannot verbalize can be seen on his face. This hero, this battle-scarred warrior, the man some call the father of the Civil Rights Movement, sits motionless in his chair. An old man forgotten.

Today few present-generation blacks, blacks who pass effortlessly through the doors that Nixon forced open, even know his name. Even fewer have knowledge of his incredible contributions to their lives.

Subsequently overshadowed by the charismatic Martin Luther King, Jr., Nixon seemingly has been bypassed by history. But it was Nixon, with the equivalent of an elementary school education, who started it all.

Nixon, hand-in-hand with two then political unknowns, Rosa Parks and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., planned, implemented, and financed the successful 1955 Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott—the start of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement. Little did they then realize that what was beginning as a small personal protest would ignite a massive movement of united blacks, a protest that would eventually change America's social fabric. How did Montgomery honor the father at the 1980, twenty-fifth anniversary observance of the bus boycott? Nixon was not invited to participate.

"Everyone who knows the truth knows I started the Montgomery bus boycott, but I wasn't on the program," Nixon says. "Outside of Montgomery people respect me. I just have been walked on so much, it is a wonder I do

anything anymore."

The legends surrounding King's greatness continue to grow, but the process only serves to increase the darkness in which many of the heroes of the movement live. That darkness has made history blind.

"Let's be fair about this thing," Nixon says quietly. "Give Reverend King all he earned, but just like he wanted recognition for what he did, I want recognition for what I have done. . . . If I hadn't known how to get the people together, Reverend King wouldn't have gotten to first base with them. Don't get me wrong. That man could really talk, but you're looking at the one who could organize."

"Nixon was kind of like the glue that held everything together at that period of time," says Floyd Mann, who served as head of various law enforcement agencies during the Civil Rights Movement. "He was very dedicated to what he was doing to the point that people were willing to follow him."

If Nixon's contribution to the boycott was so significant, why was he not involved in the twenty-fifth anniversary event in Montgomery? "If they had a twenty-fifth anniversary celebration and Mr. Nixon was not invited, then it was put together by people who did not remember what happened," says Mann.

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*Now eighty-six years old, in 1955 E.D. Nixon was a fifty-six-year-old Pullman porter, a former state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and a veteran of decades of "fighting against racial segregation, long before it became a protest." He would play a leading role in the historic 1955-56 black boycott of Montgomery, Alabama, city buses—a role that has seemingly been forgotten today.*











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**“When I’d fight for my rights other blacks would tell me to stop causing trouble, that we had to work quietly so that our children could someday enjoy freedom.”**

**W**hat really did happen, those three decades ago? While thirty years seems a relatively short period of time, a comparison of the lives of blacks in America then and now shows a radical change, especially in the deep South. Perhaps Nixon stood on the threshold of the dream in 1955, but that was only after years of suffering through a darker nightmare.

In 1955, if a Negro wished to purchase clothing, he could only hold the particular article next to his body: no Negro could try on clothes in a store. There were separate public facilities for everything—bathrooms, fountains, elevators. Although such treatment could be termed second-class citizenship, many blacks wondered if they were citizens at all. Despite such universal degradation—degradation that touched almost every aspect of life—few were willing to speak out for Negro rights.

“When I’d fight for my rights other blacks would tell me to stop causing trouble, that we had to work quietly so that our children could someday enjoy freedom,” recalls Nixon. “But was it wrong that I wanted to taste some of that freedom for myself?”

“People were just tired of being humiliated and persecuted,” remembers Rosa Parks, the catalyst of the movement. “The situation was intolerable.”

Despite the personal feelings of Nixon and Parks, Montgomery, Alabama, seemed an unlikely candidate for civil rights activism in 1955. For many years Negroes there had been afraid of voicing their opinions and asserting their rights. Negroes in the work force were vulnerable to economic, and even physically violent, reprisals. Only members of the clergy and organized labor, whose livelihoods were protected from such economic retaliation, felt confident enough to speak out for Negro rights. Factionalism among leaders, apathy, and a large number of uneducated Negroes in the community were further impediments to civil rights gains.

But while the city of Montgomery had built what seemed to be an insurmountable wall of segregation, one man was always beating his head against it—E.D. Nixon. A Pullman porter, Nixon drew his strength from the political and economic ideas of Negro organizer A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, one of the strongest Negro groups in Amer-

ica at that time. Nixon believed that only through economic and political organization could Negro freedom be obtained, and he was willing to die for that freedom. His house was bombed, his family threatened, but he persevered.

“When I first knew him he was fighting against racial segregation, long before it became a protest,” Rosa Parks recalls. “He laid the basic groundwork for most of the civil rights struggles in Montgomery and Alabama,” says Fred Gray, attorney for Parks during the boycott. “Nixon’s presence was always felt in any battle.”

In the 1930s Nixon formed the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and later served as state president. In the 1940s Nixon organized voter registration marches to the county courthouse. In 1954 he attempted, but failed, to enroll several Negro children in an all-white public school, after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregated public school systems.

Despite such endeavors, Nixon was painfully aware that he was getting nowhere working within the legal and political systems in Montgomery; whites, firmly in control, could manipulate the system to subvert any Negro progress. But Nixon had one more hand to play: hit the white community where it could hurt the most—in the pocketbook. That pocketbook would be the Montgomery city bus system.

**I**f anything might unite apathetic Negroes, it was the cruelty of the bus system. Racial segregation was required by Alabama state law. Negroes were allowed to pay their fares at the front of the bus, but then had to reboard at the back. The front rows were reserved for whites; Negroes were never allowed in them, even if they were the only seats still vacant. Negroes seated themselves from the back of the bus to the front of their section—after their section was full, they stood.

The Montgomery city law permitted no passenger, black or white, to be forced to give up his seat once the bus was full. Nevertheless it was common practice for the bus drivers to break this rule, forcing blacks to stand while whites sat in the black section.

“We’d been talking about boycotting the buses for most of that year,” Nixon explains, “but we just didn’t have the right case to come along.” On three occasions, Negro women had been arrested on Montgomery city buses for violating the segregation law, but Nixon rejected all three as catalysts for the proposed boycott and as test cases to challenge the law. All three women, he felt, had possible weaknesses in their personal lives or personalities, areas vulnerable to exploitation by a white lawyer, or white-controlled media.

“We failed with three girls before I got to Rosa Parks,”

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*On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a former Alabama state secretary of the NAACP, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus to a white man. Seizing the opportunity, E.D. Nixon convinced the city’s black leadership to undertake a boycott in an effort to force an end to the bus segregation laws. Here Nixon escorts Mrs. Parks into the Montgomery County Courthouse during a resulting trial of boycotters in March 1956.*







## “I could organize but Reverend King could talk.”

Nixon says. “White people have used the press to destroy things they dislike. If those girls had anything in their backgrounds, they would have dug it up and destroyed our case.”

So Nixon waited patiently, praying for the right moment to start a boycott. On December 1, 1955, bus driver J. F. Blake and the city of Montgomery gave Nixon his chance—forty-two-year-old Rosa Parks. Ironically, Parks had refused to give her seat to whites on several previous occasions, but instead of being arrested, she had simply been thrown off the buses. This time would be different.

Parks, who had been the secretary of the NAACP while E. D. Nixon was president, was returning home from work at a local department store. Boarding the Cleveland Avenue bus in downtown Montgomery with her packages, she sat in a vacant seat directly behind the all-white reserved section. A Negro man sat beside her; two Negro women sat across the aisle. Things ran smoothly until the third stop: the white section was full—a white man was left standing.

“The bus driver asked us to move, but none of us did in the beginning,” Parks recalls. “Then he ordered us again and the other three moved. The driver told me he was going to arrest me if I didn’t get up, and I said go on and have me arrested. It was just a way of protesting being treated less than a human being.”

Within minutes, policemen F.B. May and D.W. Nixon boarded the bus and escorted Parks to jail. Because bus drivers were granted special police powers to enforce segregation on buses, Blake signed the Parks arrest warrant.

Nixon recalled his wife’s frantic phone call. “‘Rosa Parks has been arrested.’ I said, ‘For what?’ ‘I don’t know, just go down and get her’ . . . like I could just go down and get her.” After discovering that Parks had been arrested for violating Montgomery’s segregation law, Nixon, along with white attorney Clifford Durr, arrived at the jail. Nixon posted bond for Parks’s release. The right time had come to start the boycott.

“Nixon was the person who asked me if I was willing to use my case as a test case against racial segregation, and I said it was time,” Parks recalls. “It was time to be

respected.”

“Rosa [Parks’s reputation] was clean inside and out. No one could put a finger on her,” says Nixon. “I told my wife that night, ‘I think Jim Crow has just thrown what we wanted in our laps. We’re not going to take it anymore. We’re going to boycott the buses.’”

Nixon awoke the next morning, December 2, and began phoning Negro community leaders. “I called Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy first, and told him, ‘The time has come to make the people respect us.’ He said, ‘Fine, Brother Nick.’ I called Reverend H. H. Hubbard and he said, ‘Oh yeah, I’ll go along with you.’ I knew he’d go along with it because he was my pastor, didn’t want me to stop paying my church dues.

“The third person I called was Martin Luther King. He said, ‘Let me think about it and I’ll get back to you.’ I called eighteen people and when I called him back he said, ‘I believe you got something there and I’ll go along with you.’

“I said, ‘I’m glad to hear that because I talked to eighteen people and told them to meet at your church.’ You know, it didn’t look too good to have a meeting at your church and you not be there,” Nixon says, smiling.

Before leaving that afternoon for work, Nixon met with Joe Azbell, *Montgomery Advertiser* city editor, at the Union Train Station in Montgomery. “I told [him] I had one hot story for him to write and I knew he’d do a good job because he was always fair,” Nixon says.

Says Azbell, “I told him if I couldn’t write a decent story after what I heard then I wouldn’t write one at all.”

Azbell and Nixon discussed the proposed boycott and the arrest of Parks. The arrest had received little press attention: a four-paragraph story buried on the bottom of page 9 of the *Advertiser* was the only mention. Nixon confided that Negro leaders secretly hoped for a guilty verdict in the Parks case. Only then could her arrest serve its desired purpose: as the legal test case against segregated buses. The boycott would place daily pressure on the city to desegregate while the test case weaved through the judicial maze.

On Friday night more than forty Negro leaders met in King’s Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in downtown Montgomery. The group voted unanimously to begin the bus boycott on Monday, December 5. On Saturday morning, leaflets explaining the boycott were distributed throughout the Negro community. “Another Negro woman has been arrested and thrown into jail because she refused to get up out of her seat on the bus and give it to a white person,” the leaflet read. “This must be stopped. Negroes are citizens and have rights. Don’t ride the buses to work, to town, to school or anywhere on Monday.” Readers were also informed of a general boycott meeting scheduled for Monday night at the Holt Street Baptist Church.

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*A relative unknown in Montgomery in 1955, twenty-six-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr.—pastor of the city’s Dexter Avenue Baptist Church—caught E.D. Nixon’s eye as an eloquent and charismatic orator. Selected as president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, King (here holding a press conference at the Montgomery County Courthouse) proved a powerful spokesman for the boycott effort. He was destined to go on to become the most important figure in the subsequent nationwide struggle for black equality.*



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## **“It was a spark, a very small spark. The spark came in this old gentleman, E.D. Nixon, a man who yearned for a free society... And it changed everything.”**

Azbell's article appeared on the Sunday *Advertiser's* front page, breaking the story of the proposed boycott. No boycott leaders were identified in the story. The full text of the leaflet asking Negroes to keep off the buses was included in the article—precisely what Negro organizers needed. The bus boycott required as much exposure as possible within the Negro sections of town.

The boycott exposé sent shock waves through the white power structure. Police commissioner Clyde Sellers reported that goon squads were organized to intimidate Negroes who tried to ride the buses. Sellers ordered policemen to guard all bus stops; others were to follow the buses along their routes. Violence would not be tolerated, Sellers warned.

Azbell spent most of the weekend slaving over the boycott story. He could feel that something unique was about to happen—perhaps for the first time the rank-and-file Negroes might stand and be counted. When Azbell hit the streets after work on Sunday, any lingering doubts he had were quickly dissolved. Standing at the first stop at the nearly deserted Court Square Fountain, the center of downtown Montgomery, he witnessed what seldom occurred anywhere on Montgomery streets: a Negro standing up for his rights.

“This black came by and stood beside me, about thirty years old, and the bus pulled up,” Azbell recalls. “The bus driver opened the door, but all the black did was stare at the bus driver. ‘You gonna get in?’ And the black replied, ‘I ain’t getting on until Jim Crow gets off.’”

**O**n a bitterly cold Monday morning, December 5, Rosa Parks was found guilty in Montgomery Circuit Court of violating the state's segregation law. Her young Negro attorney, Fred Gray, informed the court that he planned to appeal. Parks was fined ten dollars, plus about four dollars in court costs; Nixon, back from his weekend work assignment as a railroad porter, signed the hundred-dollar appeal bond.

But something occurred that morning more important than Parks's conviction. The Negro community finally united behind a cause.

“When I brought Mrs. Parks out of the courthouse that morning there were more than five hundred men on the street,” Nixon remembers. “I couldn't believe my eyes. For the first time in my civil rights career I was supported by black men. The police were standing out there with sawed-off shotguns.

“I put Mrs. Parks in the car with my wife and turned to the men and said, ‘Alright, let's be sensible. See the policeman right there with that gun. He's not joking. Don't give him the opportunity. Don't spit on the sidewalk. Don't throw down a match stick. Just go back to your neighborhood, ask at least five people to meet us at

the Holt Street Baptist Church tonight. Tell them we want two thousand people at the church tonight.”

That afternoon the Negro leadership met again to elect officers for their front organization, which they named the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), and to plan strategy for the coming battle. The group formulated three demands. First, the MIA asked that bus operators treat Negro passengers with courtesy. Second, seating should be on a first-come, first-served basis. Finally, Negro drivers should be used on predominantly Negro routes.

But then came time for a decision that would change the course of American history. The leaders encouraged Nixon to accept the presidency of the MIA, but he had another choice in mind—Martin Luther King, Jr. King, caught totally by surprise by the nomination, accepted the position.

If Nixon was the architect of the boycott, then King was surely the finest pitchman anywhere. A relative unknown in Montgomery, the twenty-six-year-old King had arrived in town from Boston University in 1954 to become pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Between his duties at the church and the work on his doctoral thesis, King had enjoyed little time to become involved in community affairs. Compared to the older and more experienced ministers, he seemed an unlikely choice for any leadership responsibilities.

Why, then, was King chosen to lead the MIA? King's rhythmic eloquence had caught Nixon's eye early in 1955. A college-trained, erudite Negro would make the perfect spokesman and, more importantly, a role model for the bus boycott, Nixon thought. King's reputation was above reproach, thus, no easy target for slander.

Nixon agreed to serve as treasurer, a position that would allow him to tap his powerful labor contacts throughout the nation for much-needed money and support. As Nixon puts it, “I could organize but Reverend King could talk.” It was the perfect mixture of strategy: the economic philosophy of Nixon coupled with the nonviolent approach of King, a hybrid assault that endured through most of the civil rights struggle.

On Monday night, more than five thousand Negroes jammed the area around the Holt Street Baptist Church in support of the bus boycott. The small church was filled to capacity; those outside spilled over three blocks. “I'd never seen anything like it,” Azbell says. “They had loudspeakers set up so the crowd could hear, and as I walked through the crowd they just parted to let me through.” Azbell was one of the few whites who dared to come to the church.

“If there weren't seventy-five hundred there, there wasn't a soul,” remarks Nixon. “And Reverend King, well, he just made a masterpiece.”



King's words rolled from his lips, sweeping the hearts and minds of the congregation. The rhythmic cadence induced tears and cheers. It was the magical combination of the right man and his right moment. "If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love," King said, "future historians will say, 'There lived a great people—a black people—who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility."

The crowd exploded; a new sense of hope ripped through the audience. Black spirituals, mixed with tears and screams, echoed in the rafters. There would be no turning back.

**N**ixon, through his contacts, helped to raise more than \$400,000 to fund the boycott. King's charisma captured the attention of the nation, and suddenly he was thrown in front of a movement that could and would not be stopped.

Walking became a symbolic protest in Montgomery. Only five percent of the usual number of black passengers rode the buses the first day of the boycott. Many in the Negro community formed ragtag car-pools, while others rode in black-owned taxicabs at reduced rates. Anything but ride the bus.

As the boycott progressed, churches helped to organize transportation by taking up funds to buy cars and by distributing maps with pick-up and drop-off points. Many white housewives aided the boycott by taking on the transportation of their black help.

The Parks appeal eventually came up before a three-judge Federal Court. They ruled segregation unconstitutional.

The conflict peaked in late October 1956. On the thirtieth, Mayor Gayle of Montgomery applied for an injunction that would make the car-pools formed in response to the boycott illegal. His case came to court on November 13. It was a tense moment that would determine the success or failure of the movement. The hearing was interrupted by a message from the U.S. Supreme Court, which was hearing three cases related to the boycott: the Parks appeal; the case of King and others who were charged with violating antiboycott laws; and an appeal of the judgment of the three-judge court that segregation was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court ruling was that "Alabama's state and local laws requiring segregation on buses [were] unconstitutional." The boycott had won.

Three hundred and eighty-one days after it began, days filled with the economic and legal chess game between the MIA and the city of Montgomery, the war was over. On December 21, 1956, King and Nixon boarded a Montgomery city bus. The MIA had successfully desegregated the buses—legally and peacefully.

But the more important victory was yet to be realized. For the first time Negroes were aware that the rights they so desperately desired were within reach. For if the Montgomery experience accomplished anything, it was the formation of a blueprint, a foundation, that

Negroes throughout the segregated South could use and expand upon in other cities and towns. And those who had learned the political lessons of the bus boycott spread the word, teaching the new principles to future civil rights architects.

"It was a spark, a very small spark," Azbell says. "The spark came in this old gentleman, E.D. Nixon, a man who yearned for a free society. The spark became a flame. And it changed everything."

**N**ixon sits quietly in his small housing project office, staring blankly into the air. In five hours he has relived his part in black history and all history, from the early 1920s meetings with the great black leader, A. Philip Randolph, to the conclusion of the Montgomery bus boycott. Many emotions have appeared on his face. Some anger. Some bitterness. Some joy. Mostly emptiness.

"People don't respect me around here," Nixon says softly, "I just want to be remembered, have people say 'Because of E.D. Nixon, all people, white and black, have enjoyed civil rights.' That's all. Is it too much to ask?" Another silence follows.

From time to time during the conversation a spark would fly, the juice would begin to flow, and his words would run together with excitement. It was as if 1955 were right outside the door. So much work to be done. Only then would a glimpse of a younger warrior, the one who helped to lead the fight, show through. But now he is pensive. Quiet.

"I was a speaker up at St. Jude School in Montgomery," he says, breaking the long silence. "Some children put on a show. Here's a boy sits up there on the platform, supposed to be the bus driver. Two or three people in seats where Mrs. Parks supposed to be sitting. Finally, the bus driver turned and asked for their seats down there."

"The girl playing Mrs. Parks didn't get up. Then here comes two boys playing the role of policemen and arrested Mrs. Parks. Then after she got arrested, here comes a guy, walking real fast with a briefcase in his hand. Everyone says, 'Where you going, Reverend King?' He says, 'I'm going down there to get Mrs. Parks out of jail.' It was real embarrassing for me to be sitting there."

Several months later our paths cross again. Nixon is guest speaker in an American Studies class at the University of Alabama. Several young blacks in the audience, upset over his presentation, angrily question Nixon. They are hostile, bitter, confused. His words have challenged their beliefs. He is a threat. They point to history books as evidence that Nixon is lying for his own selfish reasons. Just an old man trying to steal Dr. King's glory. Nixon looks at them and calmly says, "That's what you've read in books. I was there. I know."★

*Richard Blake Dent is a free lance writer based in Birmingham, Alabama.*



May 19, 1780, started out about the same as most other days.  
Then night began to fall—at ten o'clock in the morning.

# New England's Darkest Day

by Sandra Hansen Konte

On May 19, 1780," Yale College president Ezra Stiles recorded in his journal, "there fell . . . a singular and very remarkable Darkness, which overspread the Hemisphere for about five hours. In the morning were showers attended by distant thunder. About ten o'clock a.m., a Darkness came on, which by Eleven was perceived to be very unusual and extraordinary, and in half an hour was considered as what was never before seen in these Northern climates in America."

Night was seemingly falling over Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, and parts of New Jersey—at 10:00 in the morning. According to eyewitness accounts, hens went to roost, cocks crowed in answer to one another, frogs peeped, and the cows went home. Many New Englanders were thrown into what one Professor Daggett dignifiedly termed, "an unnecessary consternation, as if the appearance was preternatural."

One obvious possibility for the phenomenon—an eclipse of the sun—was quickly dismissed: the moon was in the wrong phase.

What really went on during what is commonly known as "New England's Darkest Day" is still a matter of conjecture. The morning of May 19, 1780, started out the same as most mornings, except for a sprinkling of rain from changeable clouds, succeeded by a lowering sky. Then the clouds gradually became more dense. Jedediah Strong, clerk

of the Connecticut House of Representatives in Hartford, wrote that the clouds were "covering the face of the earth or bounding sight each way, [and] occasioned a solemn gloom of unusual darkness . . . a still darker cloud, rolling under the sable curtain from north and west, before eleven o'clock excluded the light, so that none could see to write or read in the House, even at either window, or distinguish persons at a small distance, or perceive any distinction of dress in the circle of attendants."

Nathan Read, a student at Harvard College, reconstructed a timetable of the events in his diary:

*5:00 A.M. — Cloudy . . . The sun just apparent & of a reddish hue.*

*About 8 — Began to rain not violently — continued for about an hour.*

*About 10 — Clouds move in a pretty brisk succession from the S.W.*

*10:30 A.M. — An uncommon degree of Darkness [commenced], which increased pretty rapidly. Vegetables (especially grass) appeared of a deep green, which increased with the darkness. Others things were tinged with yellow.*

*11:00 A.M. — Darkness increasing, Mr. Wigglesworth not able to read in a large bible by a window. Mr. Gannet not able to transact common business with letters, in a room with three windows. Fowls go to roost as at evening. . . .*

By noon, the Reverend Ebenezer Parkham of Westborough, Massa-

chusetts, reported, "I could not read anywhere in the house. We were forced to dine by candlelight. It was awful and surprising!"

Samuel Williams, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Harvard, noted that "in most parts of the country . . . people were unable to read common print, determine the time of the day by their clocks or watches, dine or manage their domestic business, without the light of candles. In some places, the darkness was so great, the persons could not read common print in the open air for several hours altogether."

Although Professor Williams sounds remarkably scientific and calm, many other New Englanders were not. At Sutton, Massachusetts, "people came flocking to the meeting house" of Reverend Doctor Hall, while in Salem, "persons in the streets became melancholy and fear seized all . . . Dr. Whitaker's congregation assembled at his meeting house."

Others sought more secular comforts. Reverend John Lathrop of Massachusetts "found the people in the tavern nearby much agitated."

The hitherto dignified members of the Connecticut Legislature came to the panicky conclusion that it was Judgment Day. When one suggested that their session be adjourned, Upper House member Abraham Davenport reportedly thundered, "The Day of Judgment is coming or it is not. If it is not there is no occasion for alarm. If it is I wish to be





found in the line of my duty. I move, therefore, that candles be brought." Despite Davenport's brave words, the House adjourned for three hours.

In the early afternoon the nervous citizenry began to observe a shift in conditions. "By two o'clock," wrote Ezra Stiles in New Haven, "it became somewhat lighter . . . at about 4 p.m., the heavens resumed their usual Light as in a cloudy day, although the cloudiness continued all the rest of the afternoon. . . ." Jedediah Strong's observations concur: "The sun made a most welcome appearance through misty air [at two o'clock]. How curious to observe the various affections in different persons! the degrees of anxiety and enthusiasm during the darkness and raillery which succeeded as soon as Phoebus and Zephyrus had chased the palpable shadows away."

As Ezra Stiles watched a perfectly normal sunrise the next morning, he noted that "such a phenomenon has *never* happened here since the English settled this country." What happened in New England on May 19, 1780? Although many theorists, both modern and contemporary, have sought to unravel the mystery, there are still conflicting explanations.

"Eighteenth-century Connecticutians," writes historian David M. Roth, "who were terrified of their darkness at noon . . . did not have the benefit of the analysis of modern-day meteorologists, who have concluded that the legendary 'Dark

Day' was the result of smoke from western forest fires obscuring the sun's rays." But naturalist Ann Sutton attributes the phenomenon to another cause: "Colonial settlers . . . could not have known that their dark days resulted from dust storms a thousand miles beyond the farthest frontier."

Contemporary observers also had their ideas. James Winthrop, librarian of Harvard College, thought that the darkness was caused by multi-layer clouds that reflected the sun's rays skyward. "As soon as the clouds had spread uniformly over the heavens," he pointed out, "there was no remarkable deficiency of light."

Professor Williams of Harvard was convinced it was caused by "vapours" of different densities at different altitudes: "By this means, the rays of light falling upon them, must have suffered a variety of refractions and reflections; and thereby become weakened, absorbed, or so far reflected, as not to fall upon objects of the earth in the usual manner."

And then there were those who rejected scientific explanations altogether. A pamphlet written by "a Farmer In the State of Massachusetts-Bay" claimed that the darkness was a warning from an angry God: New Englanders were to repent "as the day of the Lord draws nigh."

Reverend John Lathrop based his theory, which ran in a newspaper soon after the event, on physical evidence. "Upon examining the [rain water saved in tubs] I found a light

scum over it, which rubbing between my fingers I found to be nothing but the black ashes of burnt leaves. The water gave a strong sooty smell which we had observed in the air, & confirmed me in the opinion that the smell above was occasioned by the smoke . . . from the woods which had been burning for many days, mixing with the common exhalation from the earth and water . . . may perhaps be sufficient cause to produce the surprizing darkness."

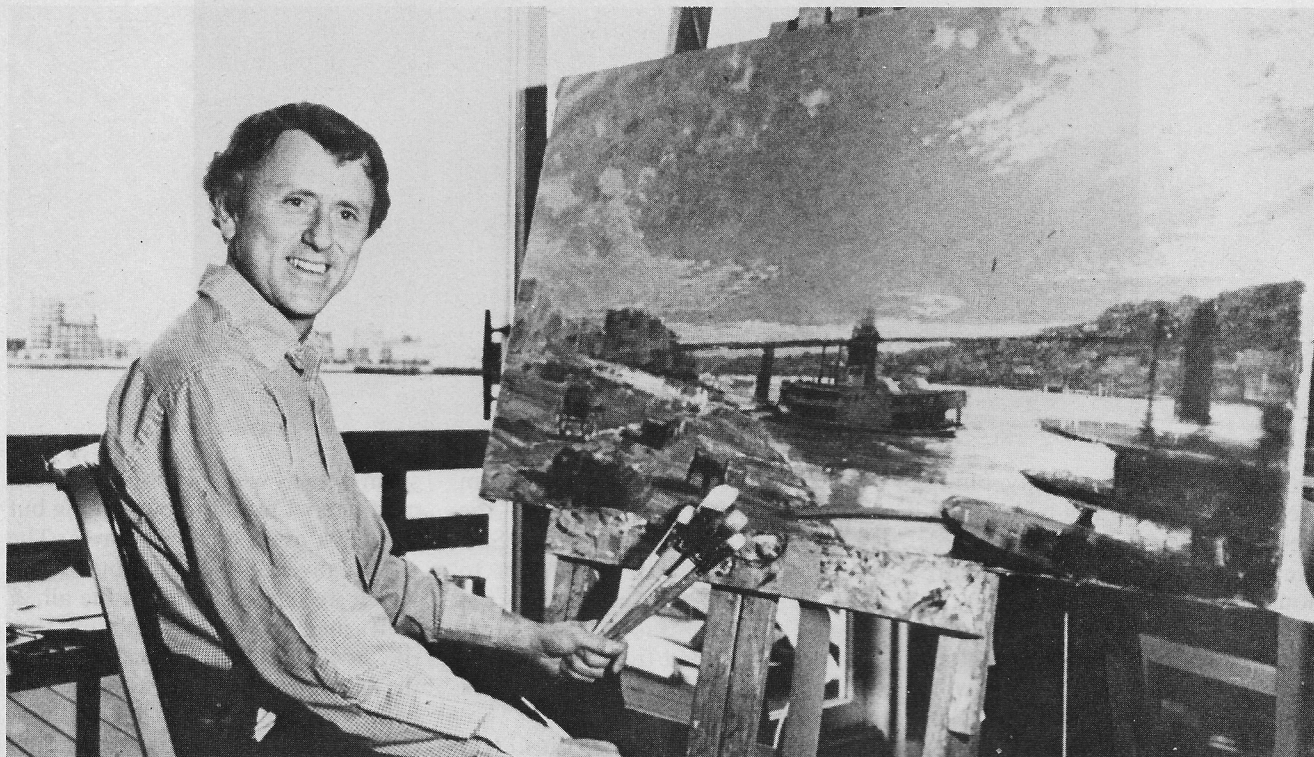
Modern evaluation of the evidence tends to support Lathrop's theory. There had been forest fires in New York (especially around Ticonderoga), New Hampshire, and New Jersey for a week or more before the darkness. A mixture of smoke from that area borne on a westerly wind, coupled with haze and fog from the seacoast and a strong easterly wind, could well have resulted in unusual cloud formations that might have brought about the phenomenon.

The exact cause of the "Dark Day" may never be determined. But New Englanders came to accept the mysterious darkness stoically as their lives returned to normal. As Bishop Edward Bass of Newbury, Massachusetts, wrote, "The fore-mentioned darkness was no doubt occasioned by an unusual occurrence of several natural causes, but to pretend fully and clearly to account for it, argues too great confidence." ★

*Sandra Hansen Konte is a free lance writer from Novato, California.*



A renowned marine artist paints great ships, ports, and events from America's nautical past.



## John Stobart Rediscovered America's Maritime Heritage

**T**here are no natural elements that have influenced man's destiny more than seas, lakes, and rivers. In addition to being necessary for survival, water has been man's causeway for transportation, his path to fulfilling an ancient need: the need to explore.

After the earth had been almost totally explored, the human race started on another great journey, the penetration of space. While these modern probes are awe-inspiring, I do not feel they are as bold or courageous as those earlier great voyages into unknown waters, rounding

Cape Horn without a chart or a timepiece for navigation, or the least knowledge of what was up ahead, or of how high the waves would mount, booted up by furious blasts of icy winds. It must have been a terrifying experience. Plowing through white-bearded, cold seas in a leaky wooden

ship with handwoven ropes and canvas in various stages of rot was perhaps man's finest moment.

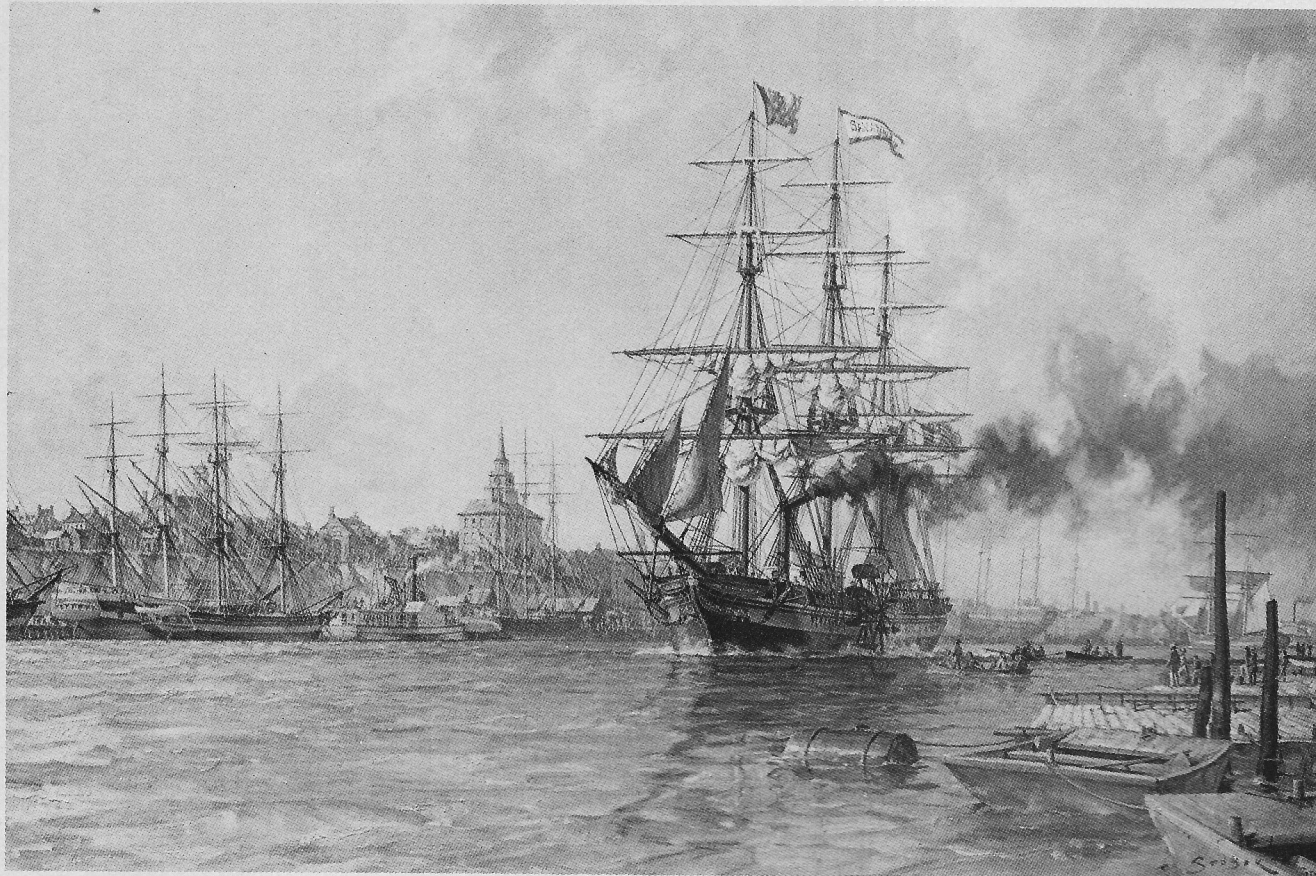
The sea has fed man, provided an arena for part of his combat, and whipped up his imagination to go places, to find new lands and wealth and cargoes to trade. All of this was accomplished in tall ships laying out their white wings of canvas. Finally one day there was a smudge on the pure azure horizon: smoke was belching out of a funnel. Steam propulsion had arrived.

With the end of the nineteenth century, a whole era was gradually

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*Adapted with permission from the book Stobart: The Rediscovery of America's Maritime Heritage by John Stobart with Robert P. Davis, by permission of the publisher, E.P. Dutton, New York. Copyright © 1985 by Maritime Heritage Enterprises, Inc.*





coming to an end. No longer were harbors filled with "forests of masts," those magical images. Ships powered by nothing but the wind struggled on for a while, only to be finally towed to the breakers' yards. Interest in commercial sail seemed to evaporate, as if the rich history of man's fortitude and ingenuity in crossing oceans under canvas had been nothing more than a humdrum step along the way of progress.

By the second half of the twentieth century, man's mind and heart were driving toward outer space but, suddenly, there was a subtle reawakening of sea history. By 1970, new maritime museums began to appear, and a love affair with old ships grew as long-deserted hulks were hauled out of their mud berths to be carefully restored. Books and magazines re-creating and honoring the days of sail gained new popularity. There was also a renaissance of marine painting, and many new artists began to visually reproduce the age of commercial sail. As most art critics agreed, this new school of sea artists, with a few exceptions, knew more about ships than painting. ♦

The clearest exception and the central figure in the renewal of marine painting has been John Stobart. This English-born artist, who came to the United States from Canada at the age of thirty-eight in 1967, brought a fresh distinction to marine art. Stobart began to re-create American waterfront life of the nineteenth century in a way that had never been seen before. European ports had been painted by many artists, but American ports had never been employed as a backdrop for serious painting.

John Stobart has tackled difficult subjects with a rare skill: the flicker of gaslight on wet cobbles, riverboats discharging their passengers as the moon slides in and out behind cumulus clouds, the fragile light of dawn drenching the sides of wooden vessels.

Stobart's achievements did not happen suddenly, nor was he an overnight sensation in the world of representational art. His education as an artist was long and thorough; the early years were lean and sometimes troubled. The making of a good artist is usually painfully slow.

When Stobart finally grasped his life's subject, "the rediscovery of America's maritime heritage," he was fully prepared to give his canvases the look and feel of the past in perfect focus, the result of the subtle blending of research and deft painting skill.

What comes through from his work is a vivid feeling that you are not in the twentieth century seeing a painting of another era, but that you are actually there. The first time I looked at a John Stobart painting, I wanted to climb in and experience all of that nineteenth-century clamor. I could almost hear the flapping of sails, the squealing of blocks, the rumbling of a wheel across the ballast rock of a slanting levee, the blasting of a steam whistle, and the shouting of orders.

Those days of maritime glory will never reappear, of course, but to see them come alive on canvas is a thrilling reminder of America's adventurous spirit and of those pockets of great nineteenth-century energy that shaped our country's heritage. ★

*Robert P. Davis*



## The USS Constitution

*Designed by Joshua Humphreys, the USS Constitution was built during 1794–97 under an act of Congress authorizing a navy for the new Union. The forty-four-gun frigate's exceptional speed and maneuverability were demonstrated in July 1812, when she encountered a squadron of five British men-of-war off the New Jersey coast. England's fastest ships chased her for three days and nights, but the Constitution escaped. A month later she earned the nickname "Old Ironsides," when she tangled with the British frigate Guerriere. Observing that the enemy's shots bounced harmlessly off the Constitution's hull, the crew yelled, "See, her sides are made of iron!" Probably her most impressive performance occurred on February 20, 1815, when she engaged two British warships. Although exceeded in tonnage and manpower, the Constitution defeated both the Cyane and Levant after four hours of combat. Finally retired in 1828, she was slated for breaking up but was saved by national interest aroused by Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem, "Old Ironsides." She survives today at Boston as the Navy's oldest commissioned vessel.*









## The Black Ball Packet *Orpheus* Leaving New York in 1835

*Perhaps the establishment of the Black Ball Line changed the course of world shipping more than any other single effort. Before the famous Black Ballers began regular transatlantic service from New York in 1818, departing exactly on schedule, rain or shine, shipmasters had long followed a policy of delaying departure until fully booked. Knowing that passengers,*

*cargo, and dispatches would reach their destination more or less on time was an obvious advantage that greatly stimulated trade. The Orpheus, below, was well known in the New York and Liverpool trade. In 1838 she made the crossing to Cork, Ireland, in the fast time of twelve-and-a-half days, and was in Liverpool only fourteen days and six hours after leaving Manhattan.*

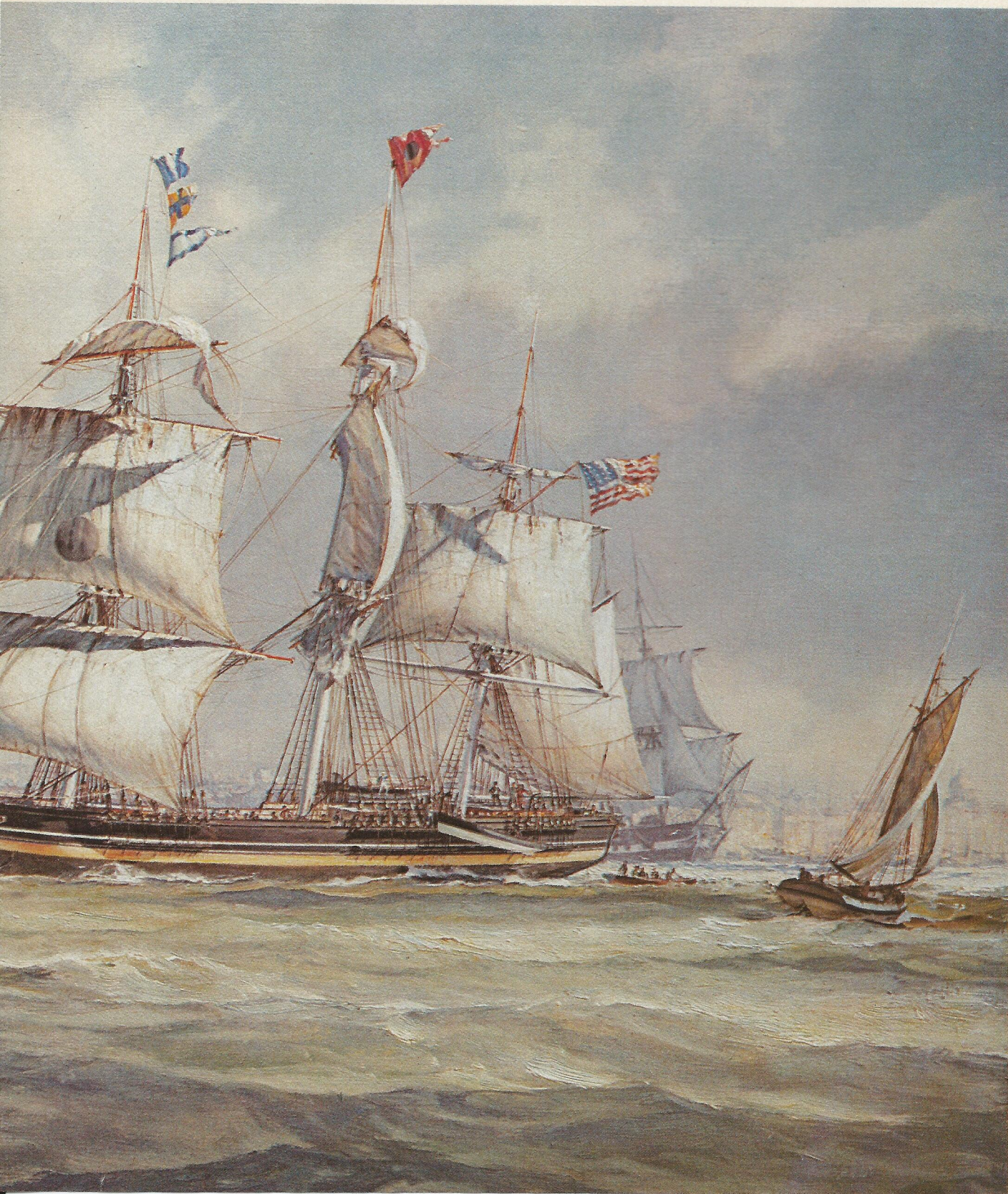




## The Flying Cloud Approaching the Golden Gate in 1851

*Overleaf: With his Flying Cloud, a sharp-bowed vessel that peeled back rugged seas, the reputation of Donald McKay soared to new heights. The great East Boston ship designer and builder was fascinated by speed, and his formula was larger and larger hulls, supporting more and more canvas. The 1,783-ton Flying Cloud was an extreme clipper, which meant that her hull was*

*designed for speed rather than stability or volume. Following her completion in 1851, the Flying Cloud was hastily pushed into the lucrative California gold rush trade. Commanded by hard-driving Josiah P. Creesy, she made a record-breaking passage to San Francisco on her maiden voyage; in the painting she is flying her famous signal, "I have been out eighty-nine days."*













## The Robert E. Lee Leaving New Orleans in 1875

*Many towns along the Mississippi River grew rapidly during the nineteenth century, but none advanced more quickly in terms of trade, wealth, and population than New Orleans. Between 1830 and 1840, the Crescent City ranked fourth in population in the country and*

*fourth in point of commerce among all the ports of the world, exceeded only by London, Liverpool, and New York. Trade peaked in 1859 and 1860, when New Orleans handled the largest receipts of produce in its history. The city's wealth was based largely on the*





cotton and passengers carried by the colorful Mississippi steamboats. The days of these sumptuous "floating palaces" began to wane after the Civil War, although they continued to parade up and down the river for another decade or more. Of all that plied the

Mississippi, the first Robert E. Lee (below) was perhaps the most famous. In 1870, in "the race of the century," she beat rival steamboat Natchez from New Orleans to St. Louis in record time, completing the passage in three days, eighteen hours, and fourteen minutes.





## South Street by Gaslight in 1880

*During the nineteenth century, New York's South Street was one of the busiest maritime crossroads in the world. By 1880 much of the port's trade had been taken over by steamships, operating from new docks on the North River and in New Jersey, but along South Street one could still see a forest of masts. By day the street*

*rang with the cries of vendors, the jolting of drays and wagons, and the chatter of merchants and shipping men. A plethora of smells—coffee, tea, spices, oil, tar, and fresh fish—gave it a strong flavor of international trade. With the fall of dusk (below), the sailmakers, ironmongers, carpenters, and ship chandlers closed*





*their shops, leaving, perhaps, a solitary fruit vendor to catch a few stray derby-hatted gentlemen. The evening's last horse-drawn cabs clip-clopped along the softly glowing cobblestones, while around the corner tipsy sailors reeled from saloons to dance halls, spending the pay accumulated on long, hard voyages.*

*Today, with the restoration of some of the old streets of the area, and with the big Cape Horners Peking and Wavertree moored at the docks of the South Street Seaport Museum, the magic of the old cobbled street continues, as a new generation rediscovers the salty flavor of America's maritime heritage. ★*





**Fifty years ago, only one in ten American farm families had electricity. Then the Rural Electrification Administration changed rural life, work, and society forever.**



NEW MEXICO, 1940. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

# Light on the Farm

by Patrick Dahl

**T**he American countryside, 1935. In all of rural America, less than eleven percent of the nation's farms had electricity. Most chores were done by hand. Living and working conditions were primitive. Farmers milked cows by hand in the dim light of lanterns. Kerosene lamps and their hated sooty chimneys provided the only light in most farm homes. Farm women were slaves to the wood range and the washboard. Children pumped water by hand and carried it by the bucketful into the house. "Bathrooms" consisted of outdoor privies—often a health hazard. Work was hard. The days were long.

For several decades, even before the depths of the Great Depression

hit the nation's farm regions, progressive thinkers and leaders had viewed the dark and drudgery-ridden rural landscape as a national disgrace—and a waste of human energies and talents. Since the turn of the century, rural migration to the "bright lights" of the cities had been increasing at a rapid rate. Rural America was becoming the primitive backwash of a society undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization.

As early as 1909 an alarmed President Theodore Roosevelt had issued the Country Life Commission Report, a compassionate, fact-finding document that brought to public light the incredible lack of services and conveniences in rural areas that

had for years been considered as necessities in the cities. The report was particularly critical of the lot of rural women: "The burden of hardships falls [more] heavily on the farmer's wife than on the farmer himself. Her life is the more monotonous and the more isolated, no matter what the wealth of poverty of the family may be. . . ."

Twenty-five years later, except for the most affluent farmers or those farms close to towns, the lack of "the electric" still kept most families

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*Suggested additional reading:* The Next Greatest Thing: Fifty Years of Rural Electrification in America (*National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Washington, D.C., 1985*).



in this\* ceaseless cycle of numbing labor and drudgery, little changed from nineteenth-century conditions.

The forces and influences—political, economic, ideological, and technological—that led to the eventual electrification of America's rural areas are many and curiously varied. Principal among them was the Great Depression itself, which caused Americans to submit to a degree of New Deal tinkering with existing economic icons and institutions. President Franklin Roosevelt's willingness to try a government-sponsored program of rural electrification brought forth a small band of advocates: assorted 1920s progressives, devotees of Frederick W. Taylor's Scientific Management principles, federal power disciples, and technocrats, all eager to tackle the rural electrification problem. Self-described as enlightened and "socially-minded" engineers, they were idealists in their public philosophies, but tough-minded pragmatists and innovators when it came to the challenge of electrifying the countryside.

Led by the progressive Philadelphia engineer, Morris Llewellyn Cooke, this cadre took up the task of fulfilling Roosevelt's charge to them, issued in an executive order dated May 11, 1935: "to initiate, formulate, administer and supervise a program of approved projects with respect to the generation, transmission and distribution of electric energy in rural areas."

After a year and some months of soul-searching and casting about for a viable plan, Cooke's little band at the new Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in Washington struck upon a method. The government would make loans to farmer-organized and -governed cooperatives, and the REA would provide the criterion and the expertise to get the fledgling rural utility systems off the ground. The REA's goals and plans were at first viewed as quixotic and amusing within the power industry, but soon the critics were to be confounded.

By early 1937, the movement for cooperative rural electrification had become a ground swell. The REA

headquarters on Washington's Dupont Circle were inundated with loan requests, and the lights blazed late into the night to meet the demand. The REA's second administrator, John Carmody, had to admonish his zealous young engineers, planners, accountants, and attorneys to leave work at a reasonable hour; too many were having accidents, falling asleep at the wheel as they drove home.

What the dry language of that Roosevelt edict had precipitated was a unique federal program of people/government participation. Enormously popular, the community-based rural electrification projects engaged the cooperative efforts and talents of thousands of rural men and women, in a partnership that would profoundly transform the nation's rural society. Here was the beginning of a wave of progress in those years of devastation, depression, and despair. It would continue through World War II, the postwar boom years, and well into the 1960s. It made rural electrification a reality in even the most remote regions.

In 1985, a half-century after Roosevelt created the little agency that took on the awesome electrification task, there are about two million miles of rural lines carrying electric power to some twenty-five million rural Americans, constituting nearly half of the nation's distribution and transmission delivery capacity. These lines are operated by some one thousand rural electric systems that on the average serve fewer than five consumers per mile of line.

Today the unique experience of that people's movement, coupled with a popular and dynamic government program, stands as a hallmark twentieth-century achievement in economic cooperation and participatory democracy. Cooperative rural electrification and the "REA pattern" have become models for economic planning and development in emerging nations worldwide.

But the real significance of rural electrification is perhaps best measured in the human terms of those who experienced it. On farms across

the land the first glow of the naked bulb was witnessed then—and is recalled today—with a sense of awe. "The night the lights came on" is often recorded as a high moment in the lives of American rural families: an important date, ranking with marriages and births as a day to cherish. And the recollection of it has become a part of folklore. A Kentucky farmer recalled his boyhood and that memorable event:

"We'd heard the government was going to lend us money to get lights, but we didn't believe it until we saw the men putting up the poles. Every day they came closer, and we realized it really was going to happen. So Dad went ahead and had the house wired.

"It was almost two months later before they finished the job and turned on the power. I'll never forget that day—it was late on a November afternoon, just before dark. All we had was wires hanging down from the ceiling in every room, with bare bulbs on the end. Dad turned on the one in the kitchen first, and he just stood there, holding on to the pull-chain. He said to me, 'Carl, come here and hang on to this so I can turn on the light in the sitting room.'

"I knew he didn't have to do that and I told him to stop holding it, that it would stay on. He finally let go, and then looked kind of foolish."

It was like that all across the land.

In a small farmhouse in Missouri, a woman ignored the lamps that suddenly burst into brilliance, and ran instead to the kitchen, where her new refrigerator had stood for a month awaiting the current. When she saw the little light inside really come on, she burst into tears of relief.

Another woman, 103 years old, wrote to the REA to thank the government. She had never felt that she had been born too soon, she said, until the night the lights came. Now she regretted that she would see so little of the future. ★

*Patrick Dahl of Washington, D.C., helped to coordinate this year's nationwide observances commemorating fifty years of rural electrification.*



## Before the Lights Came On

*What the cycle of unending labor really meant on the 89 percent of American farms that had no electricity was reflected in specific terms in a 1936 U.S.*

*Department of Agriculture survey. It showed that of the more than thirty-two million persons living on farms, 73 percent had to carry their water from wells or other sources of supply; 77 percent had unsanitary and inconvenient outdoor toilets; 93 percent had neither bathtub nor shower; 86 percent depended on kerosene*

*or gasoline lamps (or candles) for lighting; and 48 percent were compelled to do their laundry work outside. The lack of electric power and the lack of amenities electricity could provide had a great deal to do with how rural Americans were regarded and how they regarded themselves. The term "backward," used justifiably or not, was often the onerous label applied by their town-dwelling cousins who had escaped to the "bright lights."*



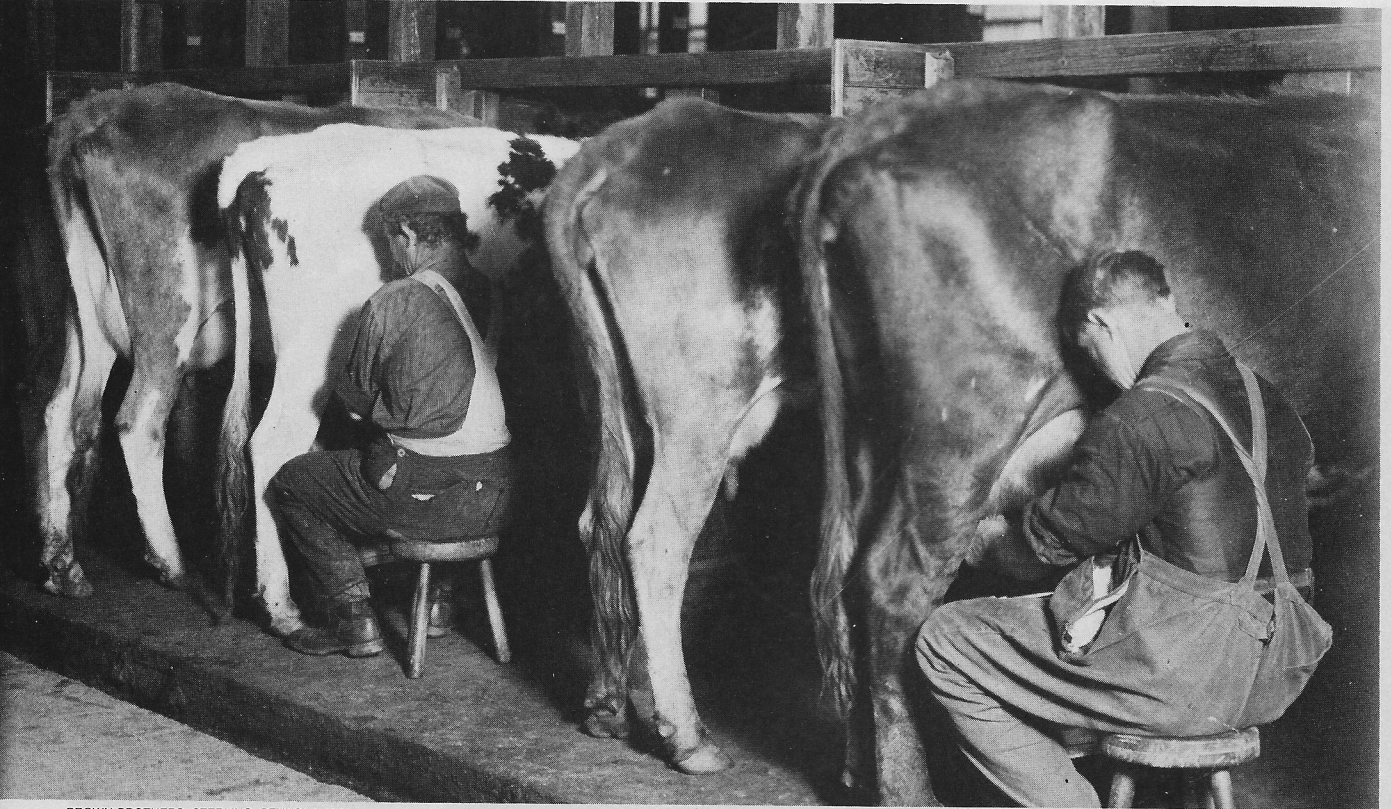




NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

From Dream into Reality

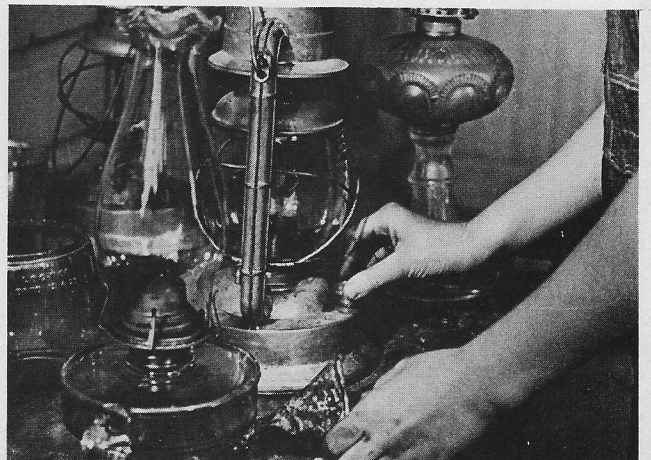
It was in the early 1930s that the first electric power lines were strung in rural areas. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) was formed to help farmers and ranchers get electricity. The NRECA has since grown into the largest electric utility in the United States, serving more than 100 million people. The NRECA's success is a testament to the power of cooperation and the importance of electricity in rural life.



BROWN BROTHERS, STERLING, PENNSYLVANIA



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



## From Dream into Reality

*During its first four years, the Rural Electrification Administration financed and made possible the energizing of 180,000 miles of power lines, with another 80,000 under construction or being planned. Out in the country, the REA field representatives worked day and night, meeting with rural folks and outlining the procedures for organizing the electric co-ops. And rural men and women went up and down country roads from farm to farm to get the needed signatures of new members, to organize their co-ops, and to obtain the hard-to-come-by five-dollar "sign up" fee. Then came the long hours of sketching in electric lines on rough county maps, as the organizers, working with contractors and engineers, acquired land easements from their neighbors, and, finally, prepared loan applications to the REA.*



FINDING THEIR HOMES ON THE REA MAP, MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA, 1939; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



DEMONSTRATING ELECTRIC SHEEP SHEARING; NATIONAL ARCHIVES



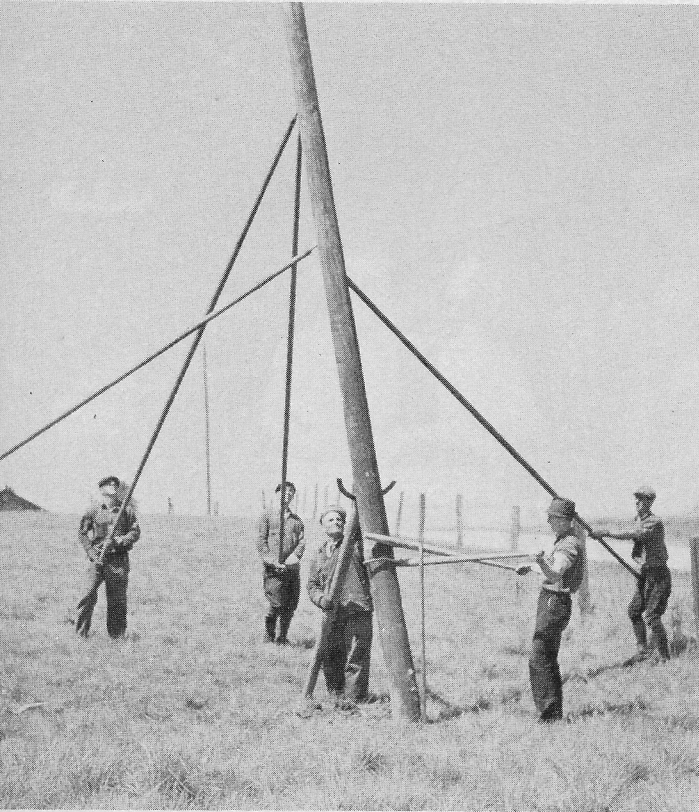
SIGNING UP FOR ELECTRICITY, TYNDALL, SOUTH DAKOTA, 1945; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE





NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

*Across the land, electric poles began to dot the landscape. Line crews, often aided by eager farmers themselves, cleared rights-of-way and dug holes, while others came behind with the poles and hardware. Last came the crews to string the wire. In the earliest days, erection of the power lines was sometimes quite a primitive affair, but the REA soon developed assembly-line methods for line construction, and uniform procedures and standardized types of electric hardware. The results were lowered costs that made electricity feasible for more and more rural people.*



NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



NATIONAL ARCHIVES



# The Next-Greatest Thing

Once the electric lines moved out into the countryside, families quickly prepared for the new service. In most cases they heeded the advice of the REA and their local co-ops, and went ahead and had the house wired before the lines were energized. "Group wiring plans" kept this cost to \$55, and manufacturers working with the REA put out "lighting packages" containing nine fixtures and selling for about \$18. The long-awaited first magic glow of the lights was witnessed by families with wonder and awe. Countless stories were told of children, and parents too, running through their homes, turning lights on and off; of women quietly weeping to see new appliances really working.



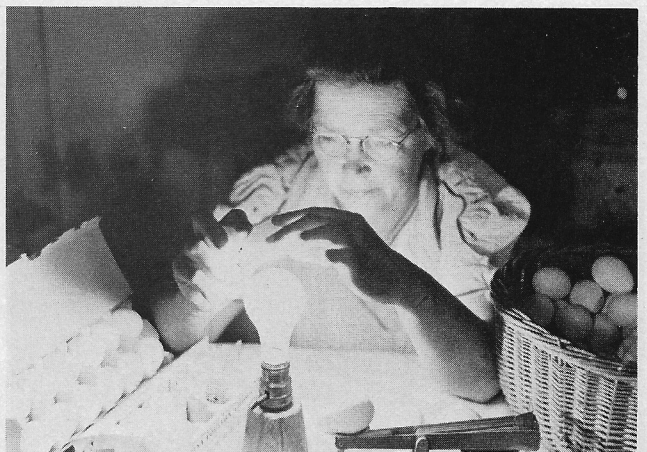
VOLTAIRE, NORTH DAKOTA, 1952; NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE; TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY



MONTICELLO, INDIANA, 1946; NATIONAL ARCHIVES



NATIONAL ARCHIVES



*Traveling a country road at dusk in the early 1940s, a land buyer for the Tennessee Valley Authority came upon the owner of a newly electrified farm. Sitting on a little knoll overlooking his farm, he was gazing enthralled at his house, barn, and smokehouse, all ablaze with light. About a week later the TVA man attended the church to which the man belonged. During the service, the man got up to express his spiritual condition, giving witness thusly: "Brothers and sisters, I want to tell you this. The greatest thing on earth is to have the love of God in your heart, and the next-greatest thing is to have electricity in your house." ★*





A classic narrative of daring and adventure during the Civil War

# Escape from Libby Prison

by Frank E. Moran

## Part II of Two Parts

*In February 1864, notorious Libby Prison, a converted warehouse in Richmond, Virginia, was the scene of an ingenious and daring escape by 109 of the more than 1,200 Union officers confined there. The following account by Captain Frank E. Moran of the Seventy-Third New York Regiment—a participant in the escape attempt—first appeared in the March 1888 issue of Century Magazine. For suspense and adventure it ranks high among prisoner-of-war escape stories from the Civil War or any subsequent conflict. The accompanying narrative (Part I appeared in our November issue) begins after Colonel Thomas E. Rose, assisted by Major Andrew G. Hamilton and others, had devoted thirty-nine nights of intense and fruitless effort to attempt to tunnel out of “Rat Hell,” an abandoned cellar at the east end of the prison.*

Rose and Hamilton now made a careful examination of the northeast corner of the cellar, at which point the earth's surface outside the prison wall, being eight or nine feet higher than at the canal or south side, afforded a better place to dig than the latter, being free from water and with clay-top enough to support itself.

The unfavorable feature of this point was that the only possible terminus of a tunnel was a yard between the buildings beyond the vacant lot on the east of Libby. Another objection was that, even when the tunnel should be made to that point, the exit of any escaping party must be made through an arched wagon-way under the building that faced the street on the canal side, and every man must emerge on the sidewalk in sight of the sentinel on the south side of the prison, the intervening space being in the full glare of a gas-lamp.

It was carefully noted, however, by Rose, long before this, that the west end of the beat of the nearest sentinel was between fifty and sixty feet from the point of egress, and it was concluded that by walking away at the moment the sentinel commenced his pace westward, one would be far enough into the shadow to make it improbable that the color of his clothing could be made out by the sentinel when he faced about to return towards the eastern end of his beat, which terminated ten to fifteen feet east of the prison wall.

It was further considered that as these sentinels had for their special duty the guarding of the prison, they would not be eager to burden themselves with the duty

of molesting persons seen in the vicinity outside of their jurisdiction, provided, of course, that the retreating forms—many of which they must certainly see—were not recognized as Yankees. All others they might properly leave for the challenge and usual examination of the provost guard who patrolled the streets of Richmond.

The wall of that east cellar had to be broken in three places before a place was found where the earth was firm enough to support a tunnel. The two men worked on with stubborn patience, but their progress was painfully slow. Rose dug assiduously, and Hamilton alternately fanned air to his comrade and dragged out and hid the excavated dirt, but the old difficulty confronted him. The candle would not burn, the air could not be fanned fast enough with a hat and the dirt hidden, without better contrivances or additional help.

Rose now reassembled the party and selected from them a number who were willing to renew the attempt. These volunteers were divided into three reliefs, as before.

Against the east wall stood a series of stone fenders abutting inward, and these, being at uniform intervals of about twenty feet, cast deep shadows that fell towards the prison front. In one of these dark recesses the wall was pierced, well up towards the Carey street end. The earth here had very densely compressed sand, that offered a strong resistance to the broad-bladed chisel, which was their only effective implement, and it was clear that a long turn of hard work must be done to penetrate under the fifty-foot lot to the objective point.





*Libby Prison, photographed here in 1862, fronted on the James River and had been built as a warehouse in three sections. Three upper floors contained nine large rooms, and three more basement chambers opened onto a street on the downhill, canal side of the building. In 1864, after gaining access to the basement by cutting through a fireplace on the first floor, prisoners led by Colonel Thomas E. Rose drove an escape tunnel under a vacant lot at the far end of the prison.*

The lower part of the tunnel was about six inches above the level of the cellar floor, and its top about two and a half feet. Absolute accuracy was of course impossible, either in giving the hole a perfectly horizontal direction or in preserving uniform dimensions; but a fair level was preserved, and the average diameter of the tunnel was a little over two feet.

Usually one man would dig, and fill the spittoon with earth; upon the signal of a gentle pull, an assistant would drag the load into the cellar by the clotheslines fastened to each side of this box, and then hide it under the straw; a third constantly fanned air into the tunnel with a rubber blanket stretched across a frame, the invention of the ingenious Hamilton; a fourth would give occasional relief to the last two; while a fifth would keep a lookout.

The danger of discovery was continual, for the guards were under instructions from the prison commandant to make occasional visits to every accessible part of the building; so that it was not unusual for a sergeant and

several men to enter the south door of Rat Hell in the daytime, while the diggers were at labor in the dark north end.

During these visits the digger would watch the intruders with his head sticking out of the tunnel, while the others would crouch behind the low stone fenders, or crawl quickly under the straw. This was, however, so uninviting a place, that the Confederates made this visit as brief as a nominal compliance with their orders permitted, and they did not often venture into the dark north end.

The work was fearfully monotonous, and the more so because absolute silence was commanded, the men moving about mutely in the dark. The darkness caused them frequently to become bewildered and lost; and as Rose could not call out for them, he had often to hunt all over the big dungeon to gather them up and pilot them to their places.

The difficulty of forcing air to the digger, whose body nearly filled the tunnel, increased as the hole was extended, and compelled the operator to back into the cellar often for air, and for air that was itself foul enough to sicken a strong man.

But they were no longer harassed with the water and timbers that had impeded their progress at the south end. Moreover, experience was daily making each man more proficient in the work. Rose urged them on with cheery enthusiasm, and their hopes rose high, for already they had penetrated beyond the sentinels' beat and were nearing the goal.



Under a standing rule, the twelve hundred prisoners in Libby Prison were counted twice each day, the first count being made about nine in the morning, and the last about four in the afternoon. This duty was habitually done by the clerk of the prison, E.W. Ross, a civilian employed by the commandant. He was christened by the prisoners, by reason of his diminutive size, "Little Ross."

Ross was generally attended by several guards to keep the prisoners in four closed ranks during the count. The commandant of the prison, Major Thomas P. Turner, seldom came upstairs.

To conceal the absence of the five men who were daily at work at the tunnel, their comrades of the party off digging duty resorted, under Colonel Rose's supervision, to a device of "repeating." This scheme, which was of vital importance to hoodwink the Confederates and avert mischievous curiosity among the uninformed prisoners, was a hazardous business that severely taxed the ingenuity of the leader and his coadjutors.

The manner of the fraud varied with circumstances, but in general it was worked by five of Rose's men, after being counted at or near the head of the line, stooping down and running towards the foot of the ranks, where a few moments later they were counted a second time, thus making Ross's book balance.

The whole five, however, could not always do this undiscovered, and perhaps but three of the number could repeat. These occasional mishaps threatened to dethrone the reason of the puzzled clerk; but in the next count the "repeaters" would succeed in their game, and for the time all went well, until one day some of the prisoners took it into their heads, "just for the fun of the thing," to imitate the repeaters.

Unconscious of the curses that the party were mentally hurling at them, the meddlers' sole purpose was to make "Little Ross" mad. In this they certainly met with signal success, for the reason of the mystified clerk seemed to totter as he repeated the count over and over in the hope of finding out how one careful count would show that three prisoners were missing and the next an excess of fifteen.

Finally Ross, lashed into uncontrollable fury by the sarcastic remarks of his employers and the heartless merriment of the grinning Yanks before him, poured forth his goaded soul as follows:

"Now, gentlemen, look yere: I can count a hundred as good as any blank man in this yere town, but I'll be blank blanked if I can count a hundred of you blanked Yankees. Now, gentlemen, there's one thing sho, there's eight or ten of you-uns yere that ain't yere!"

This extraordinary accusation "brought down the house," and the Confederate officers and guards, and finally Ross himself, were caught by the resistless contagion of laughter that shook the rafters of Libby.

The officials somehow found a balance that day on the books and the danger was for this once over, to the infinite relief of Rose and his anxious comrades. But the Confederates appeared dissatisfied with something, and

came upstairs next morning with more officers and with double the usual number of guards; and some of these were now stationed about the room so as to make it next to impossible to work the repeating device successfully. On this day, for some reason, there were but two men in the cellar, and these were Major B.B. McDonald, 101st Ohio, and Captain I.N. Johnson, 6th Kentucky.

The count began as usual, and, despite the guard in rear, two of the party attempted the repeating device by forcing their way through the center of the ranks towards the left; but the "fun of the thing" had now worn out with the unsuspecting meddlers, who resisted the passage of the two men.

This drew the attention of the Confederate officers, and the repeaters were threatened with punishment. The result was inevitable, the count showed two missing: it was carefully repeated, with the same result. To the dismay of Rose and his little band, the prison register was now brought upstairs and a long, tedious roll call by name was endured, each man passing through a door as his name was called, and between a line of guards.

No stratagem that Rose could now invent could avert the discovery by the Confederates that McDonald and Johnson had disappeared, and the mystery of their departure would be almost certain to cause an inquiry and investigation that would put their plot in peril and probably reveal it.

At last, the "Js" were reached and the name of I.N. Johnson was lustily shouted and repeated, with no response. The roll call proceeded until the name of B.B. McDonald was reached. To the increasing amazement of everybody but the conspirators, he also had vanished. A careful note was taken of these two names by the Confederates, and a thousand tongues were now busy with the names of the men and their singular disappearance.

The conspirators were in a tight place, and must choose between two things. One was for the men in the cellar to return that night and face the Confederates with the most plausible explanation of their absence that they could invent, and the other alternative was the revolting one of remaining in their horrible abode until the completion of the tunnel.

When night came the fireplace was opened, and the unlucky pair were informed of the situation of affairs and asked to choose between the alternatives presented. McDonald decided to return and face the music; but Johnson, doubtful if the Confederates would be hoodwinked by any explanation, voted to remain where he was and wait for the finish of the tunnel.

As was anticipated, McDonald's return awakened almost as much curiosity among the inhabitants of Libby as his disappearance, and he was soon called to account by the Confederates. He told them he had fallen asleep in an out-of-the-way place in the upper west room, where the guards must have overlooked him during the roll call of the day before. McDonald was not further molested.

The garrulous busybodies [other Union prisoners, not



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## **A glance showed him his nearly fatal blunder, against which he had been earnestly warned. McDonald saw that he had broken through in the open lot in full view of a sentinel.**

aware of the escape plot], who were Rose's chief dread, told the Confederate officials that they had certainly slept near Johnson the night before the day he was missed. Lieutenant J.C. Fislar (of the working party), who also slept next to Johnson, boldly declared this a case of mistaken identity, and confidently expressed his belief to both Confederates and Federals who gathered around him that Johnson had escaped and was by this time, no doubt, safe in the Union lines. To this he added the positive statement that Johnson had not been in his accustomed sleeping place for a good many nights. The busybodies, who had indeed told the truth, looked at the speaker in speechless amazement, but reiterated their statements. But others of the conspirators took Fislar's bold cue and stoutly corroborated him.

Johnson was, of course, nightly fed by his companions, and gave them such assistance as he could at the work; but it soon became apparent that a man could not long exist in such a continuously pestilential atmosphere. How long were the days and nights the poor fellow passed among the squealing rats no tongue can tell—the sickening air, the deathly chill, the horrible, interminable darkness. One day out of three was an ordeal for the workers, who at least had a rest of two days afterward.

As a desperate measure of relief it was arranged, with the utmost caution, that late each night Johnson should come upstairs, when all was dark and the prison in slumber, and sleep among the prisoners until just before the time for closing the fireplace opening, about four o'clock each morning. As he spoke to no one and the room was dark, his presence was never known, even to those who lay next to him; and indeed he listened to many earnest conversations between his neighbors regarding his wonderful disappearance.

As a matter of course, the incidents above narrated made day-work on the tunnel too hazardous to be indulged in, on account of the increased difficulty of accounting for absentees, but the party continued the night-work with unabated industry.

When the opening had been extended nearly across the lot, some of the party believed they had entered under the yard which was the intended terminus; and one night when McDonald was the digger, so confident was he that the desired distance had been made, that he turned his direction upward, and soon broke through to the surface.

A glance showed him his nearly fatal blunder, against which, indeed, he had been earnestly warned by Rose, who from the first had carefully estimated the intervening distance between the east wall of Libby and the terminus. In fact, McDonald saw that he had broken through in the open lot which was all in full view of a

sentinel who was dangerously close. Appalled by what he had done, he retreated to the cellar and reported to his companions the disaster.

Believing that discovery was now certain, the party sent one of their number up the rope to report to Rose, who was asleep. The hour was about midnight when the leader learned of the mischief. He quickly got up, descended into the cellar, entered the tunnel, and examined the break. It was not so near the sentinel's path as McDonald's excited report indicated, and fortunately the breach was at a point whence the surface sloped downward towards the east. He took off his blouse and stuffed it into the opening, pulling the dirt over it noiselessly, and in a few minutes there was little surface evidence of the hole. He then backed into the cellar in the usual crab fashion, and gave directions for the required depression of the tunnel and vigorous resumption of the work.

The hole made in the roof of the tunnel was not much larger than a rat hole, and could not be seen from the prison. But the next night Rose shoved an old shoe out of the hole, and the day afterward he looked down through the prison bars and saw the shoe lying where he had placed it, and judged from its position that he had better incline the direction of the tunnel slightly to the left.

Meantime Captain Johnson was dragging out a wretched existence in Rat Hell, and for safety was obliged to confine himself by day to the dark north end, for the Confederates often came into the place very suddenly through the south entrance. When they ventured too close, Johnson would get into a pit that he had dug under the straw as a hiding-hole both for himself and the tunnelers' tools, and quickly cover himself with a huge heap of short packing straw. A score of times he came near being stepped upon by the Confederates, and more than once the dust of the straw compelled him to sneeze in their very presence.

**O**n Saturday, February 6, a larger party than usual of the Confederates came into the cellar, walked by the very mouth of the tunnel, and seemed to be making a critical survey of the entire place. They remained an unusually long time and conversed in low tones; several of them even kicked the loose straw about; and in fact everything seemed to indicate to Johnson—who was the only one of the working party now in the cellar—that the long-averted discovery had been made. That night he reported matters fully to Rose at the fireplace opening.

The tunnel was now nearly completed, and when Rose conveyed Johnson's message to the party it caused dismay. Even the stouthearted Hamilton was for once excited, and the leader whose unflinching fortitude had



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## **In the agony of suffocation he beat his two fists against the roof of his grave with the might of despair . . . the crust gave way and loosened earth showered upon his dripping face.**

thus far inspired his little band had his brave spirits dashed. But his buoyant courage rose quickly to its high and natural level. He could no longer doubt that the suspicions of the Confederates were aroused, but he felt convinced that these suspicions had not as yet assumed such a definite shape as most of his companions thought; still, he had abundant reason to believe that the success of the tunnel absolutely demanded its speedy completion, and he now firmly resolved that a desperate effort should be made to that end.

Remembering that the next day was Sunday, and that it was not customary for the Confederates to visit the operating-cellar on that day, he determined to make the most in his power of the now precious time. He therefore caused all the party to remain upstairs, directing them to keep a close watch upon the Confederates from all available points of observation, to avoid being seen in whispering groups—in short, to avoid all things calculated to excite the curiosity of friends or suspicion of enemies—and to await his return.

Taking McDonald with him, he went down through the fireplace before daylight on Sunday morning, and, bidding Johnson to keep a vigilant watch for intruders and McDonald to fan air in to him, he entered the tunnel and began the forlorn hope. From this time forward he never once turned over the chisel to a relief.

All day long he worked with the tireless patience of a beaver. When night came, even his single helper, who performed the double duty of fanning air and hiding the excavated earth, was ill from his hard, long task and the deadly air of the cellar. Yet this was as nothing compared with the fatigue of the duty that Rose had performed; and when at last, far into the night, he backed into the cellar, he had scarcely strength enough to stagger across to the rope ladder.

He had made more than double the distance that had been accomplished under the system of reliefs on any previous day, and the non-appearance of the Confederates encouraged the hope that another day, without interruption, would see the work completed. He therefore determined to refresh himself by a night's sleep for the finish. The drooping spirits of his party were revived by the report of his progress and his unalterable confidence.

**M**onday morning dawned and the great prison with its twelve hundred captives was again astir. The general crowd did not suspect the suppressed excitement and anxiety of the little party that waited through that interminable day, which they felt must determine the fate of their project.

Rose had repeated the instructions of the day before, and again descended to Rat Hell with McDonald for his only helper. Johnson reported all quiet, and McDonald

taking up his former duties at the tunnel's mouth, Rose once more entered with his chisel. It was now the seventeenth day since the present tunnel was begun, and he resolved it should be the last. Hour after hour passed, and still the busy chisel was plied, and still the little wooden box with its freight of earth made its monotonous trips from the digger to his comrade and back again.

From the early morning of Monday, February 8, 1864, until an hour after midnight the next morning, his work went on. As midnight approached, Rose was nearly a physical wreck: the perspiration dripped from every pore of his exhausted body; food he could not have eaten if he had had it. His labors thus far had given him a somewhat exaggerated estimate of his physical powers. The sensation of fainting was strange to him, but his staggering senses warned him that to faint where he was meant at once his death and burial. He could scarcely inflate his lungs with the poisonous air of the pit; his muscles quivered with increasing weakness and the warning spasmodic tremor which their unnatural strain induced; his head swam like that of a drowning person.

By midnight he had struck and passed beyond a post which he felt must be in the yard. During the last few minutes he had turned his course upward, and to relieve his cramped limbs he turned upon his back. His strength was nearly gone: the feeble stream of air which his comrade was trying, with all his might, to send to him from a distance of fifty-three feet could no longer reach him through the deadly stench. His senses reeled; he had not breath nor strength enough to retreat backward through his narrow grave. In the agony of suffocation he dropped the dull chisel and beat his two fists against the roof of his grave with the might of despair—when, blessed boon! the crust gave way and the loosened earth showered upon his dripping face, purple with agony; his famished eye caught sight of a radiant star in the blue vault above him; a flood of light and a volume of cool, delicious air poured over him. At that very instant the sentinel's cry rang out like a prophecy—"Half-past one, and all's well!"

Recovering quickly under the inspiring air, he dragged his body out of the hole and made a careful survey of the yard in which he found himself. He was under a shed, with a board fence between him and the east side sentinels, and the gable end of Libby loomed grimly against the blue sky. He found the wagon way under the south side building closed from the street by a gate fastened by a swinging bar, which, after a good many efforts, he succeeded in opening. This was the only exit to the street.

As soon as the nearest sentinel's back was turned he stepped out and walked quickly to the east. At the first





corner he turned north, carefully avoiding the sentinels in front of the "Pemberton Buildings" (another military prison northeast of Libby), and at the corner above this he went westward, then south to the edge of the canal, and thus, by cautious moving, made a minute examination of Libby from all sides.

Having satisfied his desires, he retraced his steps to the yard. He hunted up an old bit of heavy plank, crept back into the tunnel, feet first, drew the plank over the opening to conceal it from the notice of any possible visitors to the place, and crawled back to Rat Hell. McDonald was overjoyed, and poor Johnson almost wept with delight as Rose handed one of them his victorious old chisel and gave the other some trifle he had picked up in the outer world as a token that the Underground Railroad to God's Country was open.

Rose now climbed the rope ladder, drew it up, rebuilt the fireplace wall as usual, and, finding Hamilton, took him over near one of the windows and broke the news to him. The brave fellow was almost speechless with delight, and, quickly hunting up the rest of the party, told them that Colonel Rose wanted to see them down in the diningroom.

As they had been waiting news from their absent leader with feverish anxiety for what had seemed to them all the longest day in their lives, they instantly responded to the call and flocked around Rose a few minutes later in the dark kitchen where he waited for them. As yet they did not know what news he brought, they could scarcely wait for him to speak out; and when he announced, "Boys, the tunnel is finished," they could hardly repress a cheer. They wrung his hand again and again, and danced about with childish joy.

It was now nearly three o'clock in the morning. Rose and Hamilton were ready to go out at once, and indeed were anxious to do so, since every day of late had brought some new peril to their plans. None of the rest, however, were ready; and all urged the advantage of having a whole night in which to escape through and

beyond the Richmond fortifications, instead of the few hours of darkness which now preceded the day. To this proposition Rose and Hamilton somewhat reluctantly assented.

It was agreed that each man of the party should have the privilege of taking one friend into his confidence, and that the second party of fifteen thus formed should be obligated not to follow the working party out of the tunnel until an hour had elapsed.

Colonel H.C. Hobart, of the 21st Wisconsin, was deputed to see that the programme was observed. He was to draw up the rope ladder, hide it, and rebuild the wall; and the next night was himself to lead out the second party, deputing some trustworthy leader to follow with still another party on the third night; and thus it was to continue until as many as possible should escape.

**O**n Tuesday evening, February 9, at seven o'clock, Colonel Rose assembled his party in the kitchen, and, posting himself at the fireplace, which he opened, waited until the last man went down. He bade Colonel Hobart good-by, went down the hole, and waited until he had heard his comrade pull up the ladder and finally heard him replace the bricks in the fireplace and depart.

He now crossed Rat Hell to the entrance into the tunnel, and placed the party in the order in which they were to go out. He gave each a parting caution, thanked his brave comrades for their faithful labors, and feelingly shaking their hands, bade them God-speed and farewell.

He entered the tunnel first with Hamilton next, and was promptly followed by the whole party through the tunnel and into the yard. He opened the gate leading towards the canal and signaled the party that all was clear. Stepping out on the sidewalk as soon as the nearest sentinel's back was turned, he walked briskly down the street to the east, and a square below was joined by Hamilton. The others followed at intervals of a few minutes and disappeared in various directions in groups usually of three.



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## **I balanced myself, trusted to fortune, and fell into Rat Hell, a rayless pit of darkness, swarming with squealing rats, several of which I must have killed in my fall.**

The plan agreed upon between Colonels Rose and Hobart was frustrated by information of the party's departure leaking out; and before nine o'clock the knowledge of the existence of the tunnel and of the departure of the first party was flashed over the crowded prison, which was soon a convention of excited and whispering men. Colonel Hobart made a brave effort to restore order, but the frenzied crowd that now fiercely struggled for precedence at the fireplace was beyond human control.

Some of them had opened the fireplace and were jumping down like sheep into the cellar one after another. The Colonel implored the maddened men at least to be quiet, and put the rope ladder in position and escaped himself.

**M**y companion, Sprague, was already asleep when I lay down that night; but my other companion, Duenkel, who had been hunting for me, was very much awake, and seizing me by the collar, he whispered excitedly the fact that Colonel Rose had gone out at the head of a party through a tunnel.

For a brief moment the appalling suspicion that my friend's reason had been dethroned by illness and captivity swept over my mind; but a glance towards the window at the east end showed a quiet but apparently excited group of men from other rooms, and I now observed that several of them were bundled up for a march.

The hope of regaining liberty thrilled me like a current of electricity. Looking through the window I could see the escaping men appear one by one on the sidewalk below, opposite the exit-yard, and silently disappear, and without hindrance or challenge by the prison sentinels.

While I was eagerly surveying this scene I lost track of Duenkel, who had gone in search of further information, but ran against Lieutenant Harry Wilcox, of the 1st New York, whom I knew, and who appeared to have the "tip" regarding the tunnel. Wilcox and I agreed to unite our fortunes in the escape.

My shoes were nearly worn out and my clothes were thin and ragged. I was ill prepared for a journey in midwinter through the enemy's country: happily I had my old overcoat, and this I put on. I had not a crumb of food saved up, as did those who were posted; but as I was ill at the time, my appetite was feeble.

Wilcox and I hurried to the kitchen, where we found several hundred men struggling to be first at the opening in the fireplace. We took our places behind them and soon two hundred more closed us tightly in the mass. The room was pitch dark and the sentinel could be seen through the door cracks, within a dozen feet of us. The fight for precedence was savage, though no one spoke; but now and then fainting men begged to be released. They begged in vain: certainly some of them must have

been permanently injured.

For my own part, when I neared the stove I was nearly suffocated; but I took heart when I saw but three more men between me and the hole. At this moment a sound as of tramping feet was heard, and some idiot on the outer edge of the mob startled us with the cry, "The guards, the guards!"

A fearful panic ensued, and the entire crowd bounded towards the stairway leading up to their sleeping quarters. The stairway was unbanistered, and some of the men were forced off the edge and fell on those beneath. I was among the lightest in that crowd; and when it broke and expanded I was taken off my feet, dashed to the floor senseless, my head and one of my hands bruised and cut, and my shoulder painfully injured by the boots of the men who rushed over me.

When I gathered my swimming wits I was lying in a pool of water. The room seemed darker than before; and, to my grateful surprise, I was alone. I was now convinced that it was a false alarm, and quickly resolved to avail myself of the advantage of having the whole place to myself. I entered the cavity feet first, but found it necessary to remove my overcoat and push it through the opening, and it fell in the darkness below.

I had now no comrade, having lost Wilcox in the stampede. Rose and his party, being the first out, were several hours on their journey; and I burned to be away, knowing well that my salvation depended on my passage beyond the city defenses before the pursuing guards were on our trail, when the inevitable discovery should come at roll call.

The fact that I was alone I regretted; but I had served with McClellan in the Peninsula campaign of 1862, I knew the country well from my frequent inspection of war maps, and the friendly North Star gave me my bearings.

The rope ladder had either become broken or disarranged, but it afforded me a short hold at the top; so I balanced myself, trusted to fortune, and fell into Rat Hell, which was a rayless pit of darkness, swarming with squealing rats, several of which I must have killed in my fall. I felt a troop of them run over my face and hands before I could regain my feet. Several times I put my hand on them, and once I flung one from my shoulder. Groping around, I found a stout stick or stave, put my back to the wall, and beat about me blindly but with vigor.

In spite of the hurried instructions given me by Wilcox, I had a long and horrible hunt over the cold surface of the cellar walls in my efforts to find the entrance to the tunnel; and in two minutes after I began feeling my way with my hands I had no idea in what part of the place was the point where I had fallen: my bear-



ings were completely lost, and I must have made the circuit of Rat Hell several times. At my entrance the rats seemed to receive me with cheers sufficiently hearty, I thought, but my vain efforts to find egress seemed to kindle anew their enthusiasm. They had received large reinforcements, and my march around was now greeted with deafening squeaks.

Finally, my exploring hands fell upon a pair of heels which vanished at my touch. Here at last was the narrow road to freedom! The heels proved to be the property of Lieutenant Charles H. Morgan, 21st Wisconsin, a Chickamauga prisoner. Just ahead of him in the tunnel was Lieutenant William L. Watson, of the same company and regiment.

With my cut hand and bruised shoulder the passage through the cold, narrow grave was indescribably horrible, and when I reached the terminus in the yard I was sick and faint. The passage seemed a mile long; but the crisp, pure air and first glimpse of freedom, the sweet sense of being outdoors, and the realization that I had taken the first step towards liberty and home, had a magical effect in my restoration.

I have related before, in a published reminiscence, my experience and that of my two companions above named in the journey towards the Union lines, and our recapture. It is enough to say that it was a chapter of hair-breadth escapes, hunger, cold, suffering, and, alas! failure. We were run down and captured in the swamp several miles north of Charlottesville, and when we were taken our captors pointed out to us the smoke over a Federal outpost.

We were brought back to Libby and put in one of the dark narrow dungeons. I was afterwards confined in Macon, Georgia; Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina; and in Charlotte, North Carolina. After a captivity of just a year and eight months, during which I had made five escapes and was each time retaken, I was at last released on March 1, 1865, at Wilmington, North Carolina.

Great was the panic in Libby when the next morning's roll revealed to the astounded Confederates that 109 of their captives were missing; and as the fire-place had been rebuilt by someone and the opening of the hole in the yard been covered by the last man who went out, no human trace guided the keepers towards a solution of the mystery.

The Richmond papers having announced the "miraculous" escape of 109 Yankee officers from Libby, curious crowds flocked thither for several days until someone, happening to remove the plank in the yard, revealed the tunnel.

Several circumstances at this time combined to make this escape peculiarly exasperating to the Confederates. In obedience to repeated appeals from the Richmond newspapers, iron bars had but recently been fixed in all the prison windows for better security, and the guard had been considerably reinforced.

The columns of these same journals had just been

aglow with accounts of the daring and successful escape of the Confederate General John Morgan and his companions from the Columbus, Ohio, jail. Morgan had arrived in Richmond on the 8th of January, exactly a month prior to the completion of the tunnel, and was still the lion of the Confederate capital.

At daylight a plank was seen suspended on the outside of the east wall; this was fastened by a blanket-rope to one of the window bars and was, of course, a trick to mislead the Confederates. General John H. Winder, then in charge of all the prisoners in the Confederacy, with his headquarters in Richmond, was furious when the news reached him. After a careful external examination of the building and a talk, not of the politest kind, with Major Turner, he reached the conclusion that such an escape had but one explanation—the guards had been bribed. Accordingly, the sentinels on duty were marched off under arrest to Castle Thunder, where they were locked up and searched for "greenbacks."

The thousand and more prisoners still in Libby were compensated, in a measure, for their failure to escape by the panic they saw among the "Rebs." Messengers and dispatches were soon flying in all directions, and all the horse, foot, and dragoons of Richmond were in pursuit of the fugitives before noon. Only one man of the whole escaping party was retaken inside of the city limits. Of the 109 who got out that night, 59 reached the Union lines, 48 were recaptured, and 2 were drowned.

Colonel Streight and several other officers who had been chosen by the diggers of the tunnel to follow them out, in accordance with the agreement already referred to, lay concealed for a week in a vacant house, where they were fed by loyal friends, and escaped to the Federal lines when the first excitement had abated.

After leaving Libby, Rose and Hamilton turned northward and cautiously walked on a few squares, when suddenly they encountered some Confederates who were guarding a military hospital. Hamilton retreated quickly and ran off to the east; but Rose, who was a little in advance, walked boldly by on the opposite walk and was not challenged, and thus the two friends separated.

Hamilton, after several days of wandering and fearful exposure, came joyfully upon a Union picket squad, and received the care he painfully needed and was soon on his happy journey home.

Rose passed out of the city of Richmond to the York River Railroad, and followed its track to the Chickahominy bridge. Finding this guarded, he turned to the right, and, as the day was breaking, he came upon a camp of Confederate cavalry. His blue uniform made it exceedingly dangerous to travel in daylight in this region; and seeing a large sycamore log that was hollow, he crawled into it.

The February air was keen and biting, but he kept his cramped position until late in the afternoon, and all day he could hear the loud talk in the camp and the neighing of the horses. Towards night he came cautiously forth, and finding the Chickahominy fordable within a few



hundred yards, he succeeded in wading across: the uneven bed of the river, however, led him into several deep holes, and before he reached the shore his scanty raiment was thoroughly soaked.

He trudged on through the woods as fast as his stiffened limbs would bear him, borne up by the hope of early deliverance, and made a brave effort to shake off the horrible ague. He had not gone far, however, when he found himself again close to some Confederate cavalry, and was compelled once more to seek a hiding place.

The day seemed of interminable length, and he tried vainly in sleep to escape from hunger and cold. His teeth chattered in his head, and when he rose at dark to continue his journey his tattered clothes were frozen stiff. In this plight he pushed on resolutely, and was obliged to wade to his waist for hundreds of yards through one of those deep and treacherous morasses that proved such deadly fever-pools for McClellan's army in the campaign of 1862.

Finally he reached the high ground, and as the severe exertion had set his blood again in motion and loosened his limbs, he was making better progress, when suddenly he found himself near a Confederate picket. This picket he easily avoided, and, keeping well in the shadow of the forest and shunning the roads, he pressed forward with increasing hopes of success.

He had secured a box of matches before leaving Libby; and as the cold night came on and he felt that he was really in danger of freezing to death, he penetrated into the center of the cedar grove and built a fire in a small and secluded hollow. He felt that this was hazardous, but the necessity was desperate, since with his stiffened limbs he could no longer move along fast enough to keep the warmth of life in his body.

To add to his trouble, his foot, which had been broken in Tennessee previous to his capture, was now giving him great pain, and threatened to cripple him wholly; indeed, it would stiffen and disable the best of limbs to compass the journey he had made in darkness over strange, uneven, and hard-frozen ground, and through rivers, creeks, and bogs, and this without food or warmth.

The fire was so welcome that he slept soundly—so soundly that waking in the early morning he found his bootlegs and half his uniform burned up, the ice on the rest of it probably having prevented its total destruction.

Resuming his journey much refreshed, he reached Crump's crossroads, where he successfully avoided another picket. He traveled all day, taking occasional short rests, and before dark had reached New Kent Court House. Here again he saw some pickets, but by cautious flanking managed to pass them; but in crossing an open space a little farther on he was seen by a cavalryman, who at once put spurs to his horse and rode up to Rose, and, saluting him, inquired if he belonged to the New Kent Cavalry.

Rose had on a gray cap, and seeing that he had a stupid sort of fellow to deal with, instantly answered,

"Yes," whereupon the trooper turned his horse and rode back.

A very few moments were enough to show Rose that the cavalryman's report had failed to satisfy his comrades, whom he could see making movements for his capture. He plunged through a laurel thicket, and had no sooner emerged than he saw the Confederates deploying around it in confidence that their game was bagged. He dashed on as fast as his injured foot would let him, and entered a tract of heavily timbered land that rose to the east of this thicket.

At the border of the grove he found another picket post, and barely escaped the notice of several of the men. The only chance of escape lay through a wide, clear field before him, and even this was in full view from the grove that bordered it, and this he knew would soon swarm with his pursuers.

Across the center of this open field, which was fully half a mile wide, a ditch ran, which, although but a shallow gully, afforded a partial concealment. Rose, who could now hear the voices of the Confederates nearer and nearer, dove into the ditch as the only chance, and dropping on his hands and knees crept swiftly forward to the eastward.

In this cramped position his progress was extremely painful, and his hands were torn by the briars and stones; but forward he dashed, fully expecting a shower of bullets every minute. At last he reached the other end of the half-mile ditch, breathless and half-dead, but without having once raised his head above the gully.

Emerging from this field he found himself in the Williamsburg road, and bordering the opposite side was an extensive tract thickly covered with pines. As he crossed and entered this tract he looked back and could see his enemies, whose movements showed that they were greatly puzzled and off the scent. When at a safe distance he sought a hiding place and took a needed rest of several hours.

He then resumed his journey and followed the direction of the Williamsburg road, which he found picketed at various points, so that it was necessary to avoid open spaces. Several times during the day he saw squads of Confederate cavalry passing along the road so near that he could hear their talk. Near nightfall he reached Diasen Bridge, where he successfully passed another picket. He kept on until nearly midnight, when he lay down by a great tree and, cold as he was, slept soundly until daylight. He now made a careful reconnoissance and found near the road the ruins of an old building, which, he afterwards learned, was called "Burnt Ordinary."

He now found himself almost unable to walk with his injured foot, but, nerved by the yet bright hope of liberty, he once more went his weary way in the direction of Williamsburg. Finally he came to a place where there were some smoking fagots and a number of tracks, indicating it to have been a picket post of the previous night.



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## **Rose suddenly sprang upon the man, and before he had time to wink twisted his gun from his grasp, discharged it into the air, and ran off as fast as his poor foot would let him.**

He was now nearing Williamsburg, which, he was inclined to believe, from such meager information as had reached Libby before his departure, was in possession of the Union forces. Still, he knew that this was territory that was frequently changing hands, and was therefore likely to be under a close watch.

From this on he avoided the roads wholly and kept under cover as much as it was possible; and if compelled to cross an open field at all, he did so in a stooping position. He was now moving in a southeasterly direction, and coming again to the margin of a wide opening he saw to his unutterable joy, a body of Union troops advancing to the road towards him.

Thoroughly worn out, Rose, believing that his deliverers were at hand, sat down to await their approach. His pleasant reverie was disturbed by a sound behind and near him, and turning quickly he was startled to see three soldiers in the road along which the troops first seen were advancing. The fact that these men had not been noticed before gave Rose some uneasiness for a moment, but, as they wore blue uniforms, and moreover seemed to take no note of the approaching Federal troops, all things seemed to indicate that they were simply an advanced detail of the same body.

This seemed to be further confirmed by the fact that the trio were now moving down the road, apparently with the intent of joining the larger body; and as the ground to the east rose to a crest, both of the bodies were a minute later shut off from Rose's view.

In the full confidence that all was right he rose to his feet and walked towards the crest, to get a better view of everything and greet his comrades of the loyal blue. A walk of a hundred yards brought him again in sight of the three men, who now noticed and challenged him.

In spite of appearances a vague suspicion forced itself upon Rose, who however obeyed the summons and continued to approach the party, who now watched him with fixed attention. As he came closer to the group, the brave but unfortunate soldier saw that he was lost.

For the first time the three seemed to be made aware of the approach of the Federals, and to show consequent alarm and haste. The unhappy Rose saw before the men spoke that their blue uniform was a disguise, and the discovery brought a savage expression to his lips. He hoped and tried to convince his captors that he was a Confederate, but all in vain; they retained him as their prisoner, and now told him that they were Confederates.

Rose, in the first bitter moment of his misfortune, thought seriously of breaking away to his friends so temptingly near; but his poor broken foot and the slender chance of escaping three bullets at a few yards made this suicide, and he decided to wait for a better chance, and this came sooner than he expected.

One of the men appeared to be an officer, who detailed one of his companions to conduct Rose to the rear in the direction of Richmond. The prisoner went quietly with his guard, the other two men tarried a little to watch the advancing Federals, and now Rose began to limp like a man who was unable to go farther. Presently the ridge shut them off from the view of the others.

Rose, who had slyly been staggering closer and closer to the guard, suddenly sprang upon the man, and before he had time to wink had twisted his gun from his grasp, discharged it into the air, flung it down, and ran off as fast as his poor foot would let him towards the east and so as to avoid the rest of the Confederates. The disarmed Confederate made no attempt at pursuit, nor indeed did the other two, who were now seen retreating at a run across the adjacent fields.

Rose's heart bounded with new hope, for he felt that he would be with his advancing comrades in a few minutes at most. All at once a squad of Confederates, hitherto unseen, rose up in his very path, and beat him down with the butts of their muskets. All hands now rushed around and secured him, and one of the men called out excitedly, "Hurry up, boys; the Yankees are right here."

They rushed their prisoner into the wooded ravine, and here they were joined by the man whom Rose had just disarmed. He was in a savage mood, and declared it to be his particular desire to fill Rose full of Confederate lead. The officer in charge rebuked the man, however, and compelled him to cool down, and he went along with an injured air that excited the merriment of his comrades.

The party continued its retreat to Barhamsville, thence to the White House on the Pamunkey River, and finally to Richmond, where Rose was again restored to Libby, and, like the writer, was confined for a number of days in a narrow and loathsome cell. On the 30th of April his exchange was effected for a Confederate colonel, and on the 6th of July, 1864, he rejoined his regiment, in which he served with conspicuous gallantry to the close of the war.

As already stated, Hamilton reached the Union lines safely after many vicissitudes, and did brave service in the closing scenes of the rebellion. Johnson, whose enforced confinement in Rat Hell gave him a unique fame in Libby, also made good his escape.

Colonel Rose has served faithfully almost since the end of the war with the 16th United States Infantry, in which command he holds a captain's commission; and no one meeting him in these peaceful days [1888] would hear from his reticent lips, or read in the placid face of the veteran, the thrilling story that links his name in so remarkable a manner with the history of the famous Bastille of the Confederacy. ★







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## Itinerary:

**Saturday, April 19:** Arrive in Atlanta. A special **American History** hospitality desk awaits you at the Best Western Ladha Hotel. Cocktail party and get-acquainted dinner tonight. (D)

**Sunday, April 20:** Visit the Cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta—a massive circular painting. After lunch, continue via the battlefield of Allatoona, Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee. (L, D)

**Monday, April 21:** This morning visit Chattanooga's Missionary Ridge, where in November, 1863, General Thomas's troops stormed the heights and sent General Braxton Bragg's Confederates retreating into Georgia. Visit Chickamauga. Stand on Horseshoe Ridge, where Union General George H. Thomas and his men stood fast against repeated assaults from General James Longstreet's Confederates on September 20, 1863. Visit New Hope Church and tour Kennesaw Mountain. Arrive at Marietta. Banquet dinner and guest speaker tonight. (L, D)

**Tuesday, April 22:** Follow Sherman's relentless progress to Atlanta. Visit battle sites at Peachtree Creek and Ezra Church, and the sites of the Battle of Atlanta. Approach Atlanta from the south and southwest, following Sherman's August, 1864 route. Evening free to enjoy the attractions of Atlanta. (L)

**Wednesday, April 23:** Depart Atlanta and arrive mid-morning in Macon. Tour the Old Cannon Ball House & Macon Confederate Museum. Then continue towards Savannah. Lodging for the next two nights in Savannah. (L, D)

**Thursday, April 24:** Today, you tour Savannah. Visit Fort McAllister, where Confederate forces resisted, then surrendered to Sherman. Tour Fort Pulaski and Fort Jackson. After lunch, continue touring Savannah and outlying battlefields. This evening is free to enjoy this beautiful city. (L)

**Friday, April 25:** En route to Charleston, tour the beautiful city of Beaufort, South Carolina. Follow Sherman's line of approach through the swampy lowland regions south of Charleston—some of the worst marching country imaginable. Overnight this evening in Charleston. (L)

**Saturday, April 26:** Tour Charleston and outlying battlefields today. After lunch, take the Harbor Boat Ride to Fort Sumter and see where the Civil War began. Return to the hotel tonight for a cocktail reception and banquet dinner. (L, D)

**Sunday, April 27:** Depart for Atlanta this morning, with stops at Atlanta Airport and the Best Western Ladha.

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Itinerary and features subject to revision or change without notice



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In a year when videocassette recorders and laser-disk record players stand near the top of the holiday gift lists, it is difficult to visualize a time when the glow of a single light bulb could cause enchantment and delight. But just fifty years ago—as documented in a portfolio in this issue—fewer than one in ten rural American families had electricity.

All that began to change following President Franklin Roosevelt's creation of the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935; an REA-sponsored co-op brought these country school children their first electric light soon thereafter.